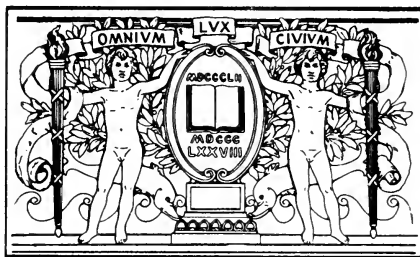


KIBUN DAIZIN
FROM SHARK-BOY
TO
MERCHANT PRINCE
GENSAI MURAI



紀大儘



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KIBUN DAIZIN





“ As the two boys were steadily gazing, up came the shark ”

KIBUN DAIZIN

OR

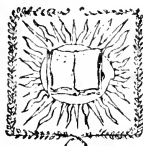
FROM SHARK-BOY TO
MERCHANT PRINCE

BY

GENSAI MURAI

TRANSLATED BY MASAO YOSHIDA

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY GEORGE VARIAN



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE CENTURY CO. counts itself fortunate in being able to present to young readers an admirable story from the Japanese, written by one of Japan's most popular novelists and filled with the spirit of that great Oriental nation. The author of this story, Gensai Murai, was once a student of the Waseda School, founded by Count Okuma, leader of the Progressive Party in Japan. There he studied English Literature as well as Japanese, and after completing his course of study he was employed by one of the well-known Tokio daily papers, called the "Hochi," to write stories for it. His writings soon arrested the attention of the reading circles in Japan. Several of his novels went through as many as ten editions within two years.

This story of Kibun Daizin is founded upon the life of Bunzayemon Kinokuniya, a Japanese merchant of the eighteenth century, whose

pluck, wisdom, and enterprising spirit made him one of the most prosperous and respected men of his time. He is much admired by his countrymen, and is talked of familiarly, even to this day, by the Japanese, under the nickname of "Kibun Daizin." "Ki" and "Bun" stand for the initials of his personal and family names, while "Daizin" means "the wealthiest man."

The shrewdness and dauntless ambition of the young hero of this story will commend him to the admiration of American boys, and in Kibun Daizin, as here pictured, they will find a true representative of the wonderful nation which, within thirty years, has entirely changed the modes of life that it had followed for more than twenty centuries, and has suddenly fallen into line with the most civilized countries of the world.

The story was translated especially for ST. NICHOLAS, and many quaint terms and expressions have been purposely retained, although the pronunciation and meaning of the Japanese words are given wherever necessary.

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KIBUN DAIZIN


KIBUN DAIZIN

OR

FROM SHARK-BOY TO MERCHANT
PRINCE

CHAPTER I

AN AMBITIOUS BOY

“ you please, sir,—”

And, attracted by a voice behind him, a well-dressed gentleman turned round and saw a boy of about thirteen or fourteen hurrying toward him,—“if you please, sir, are you the head of the Daikokuya¹?”

“Yes, I am,” answered the gentleman, eying the boy with surprise. “What can I do for you?”

“I come from Kada-no-Ura,” said the boy, making a polite bow, “and I wish to

¹ Pronounced Dy-ko-koo'ya, meaning “dry-goods house.”

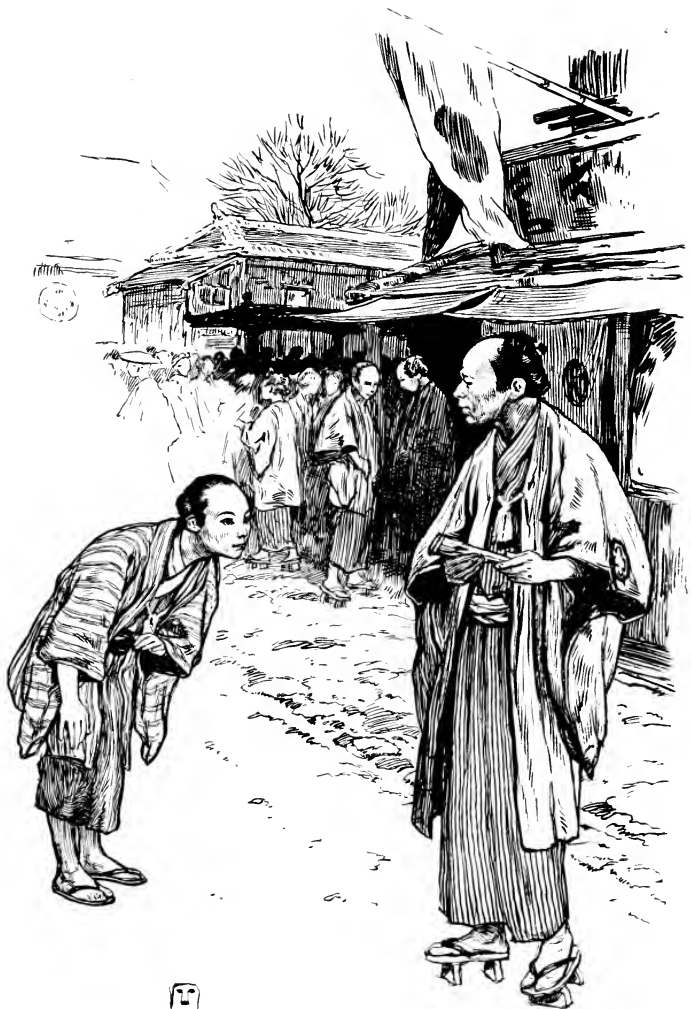
ask you a great favor. Will you please take me into your shop as an apprentice?"

"Your request is rather a strange one," said the gentleman, smiling. "Pray tell me why it is that you wish to come to me."

The boy raised his head. "Oh, sir, yours is the chief business house in Kumanô, and I would be so glad if I might learn under you."

"You wish to become a business man, do you?" said the gentleman, with a friendly nod; upon which the boy drew himself up and exclaimed, "Yes; I mean, if I can, to become the leading merchant in Japan!"

The master of the Daikokuya instinctively studied the boy's face. There was a certain nobleness and intelligence about it; he had well-cut features, a firmness about the lips, and quick-glancing eyes, and, although his clothing showed poverty, his bearing was quiet and his speech refined. These things confirmed the gentleman in the opinion that the boy was not the son of any common man; and having, as the



“‘ If you please, sir, are you the head of the Daikokuya?’ ”

employer of many hands, a quick eye to read character, he said:

“Very good, my boy! So you mean to become the leading merchant in Japan? A fine notion, to be sure. However, before I engage a boy, you know, I must have somebody to recommend him, and he must give me references. Have you any relatives in this place?”

“No, sir; I know no one,” answered the boy.

“Why, where have you been until now?”

“I have only just come from my country. The fact is, I heard your name, sir, some time ago, and being very anxious to enter your service, I left my country all by myself to come to Kumano. But I have not a single acquaintance here, nor anybody to whom I can turn. My only object was to come straight to you; and I was asking a man on the road if he could direct me to your house, when the man pointed to you and said, ‘Why, that gentleman just ahead of us is the master of the Dai-

kokuya.' And that is how it comes that I ran up to you all of a sudden in this rude way."

There was a charm in the free utterance with which the boy told his story, and, having listened to it, the gentleman said: "I understand. It is all right. As you have no friends here, I will do without a recommendation, and you shall come just as you are"; and, saying this, he brought the lad back with him to his house.

The Daikokuya, you must know, was the chief clothing establishment, or "dry-goods house," in Kumano, and did a larger business than any other in the town. On arriving there, the master took the boy with him into an inner room, and, telling his wife what had taken place, called the boy to his side. "Tell me, my boy, what is your name?"

"My name is Bunkichi."¹

"Are your parents living?"

At this question the boy hung his head sorrowfully. "I have neither father nor

¹ Pronounced Boon-kee'chee.

mother," he answered, with a choking voice and eyes filled with tears.

Filled with pity, the others asked him how long he had been left alone in the world.

"I lost my mother," he said, "more than three years ago, and my father only quite recently."

"And what was your family? Were you farmers or tradesmen?"

"Neither one nor the other. My father formerly served under the Lord of Wakayama, and received an allowance of eight hundred *koku*¹ of rice. His name was Igarashi Bunzayemon;² but, losing his position, he came to Kada-no-Ura, where we had to live in a very poor way. My father, however, would never allow me to forget that the ancestor of our house was Igarashi Kobunji,³ who served in old days at Kamakura, and gained a name for himself as a brave warrior. 'And when you

¹ One *koku* equals about five bushels.

² Pronounced Ee-gar-ash'ee Boon-zy'e-mon.

³ Pronounced Ee-gar-ash'ee Ko-boon'jee.

become a man,' my father used to say, 'you must win your way to fame, and so uphold the honor of the family; but, unlike the past, our lot to-day is cast in peaceful times when there is little chance of winning distinction in arms; but become, if you can, the leading merchant in Japan, and you will bring honor to our house.' Such was my father's counsel to me, and not long since he was taken with a severe illness and died. And now, if you please, I wish to learn the ways of business, that I may become a merchant, and I have journeyed to Kumano to throw myself on your kindness."

The gentleman listened to the boy's clear account of himself and expressed his admiration. "Ah! I was right, I see, when I thought you were not the son of an ordinary man. Your ambition to become the chief merchant in Japan is a high one, certainly; but the proverb says, 'Ants aspire to the skies,' and anything is possible to a man who puts his whole heart into his work. You are still quite

young, I should say, though you have come all the way from Kada-no-Ura by yourself, and though you talk of your affairs in a manner that would reflect credit on a grown-up man. Come, tell me, how old are you?"

"I am fourteen," he answered.

"What, not more than that?"

And the master's wife, who was by his side, could not repress her surprise, either.

At this point the *shoji*, or paper sliding doors, opened, and in ran a pretty little girl of about eleven. Her hair was drawn up into a little butterfly device on the top of her head, which shook to and fro as she ran up to her mother. Stretching out a small maple-leaf hand, with a winsome look, she said:

"Mother, please give me a cake."

"Why, my dear, where are your manners? What will our young friend here think of you?"

At this the child looked around, and, for the first time becoming aware of the boy's presence, turned shy and sat down. Look-

ing gently in her face, her mother then asked her what she had been doing. Afraid of the stranger, she whispered in her mother's ear: "I have been playing *oni*¹ with Sadakichi in the garden. But I don't like Sadakichi. When he was the *oni* he just caught me at once."

"But that often happens in playing *oni*," said the mother, with a smile.

"Yes, but he does it too much; he has no right to catch people in the way he does, and I don't wish to play with him any more."

"Well, if that is so, how would you like to play with Bunkichi here instead?"

Accepting it as one of the duties that might fall to him, to act as the child's companion and caretaker, Bunkichi, rather pleased than otherwise, offered to go out and try to amuse her. The little girl looked into her mother's face, and then at Bunkichi. "Mama, how long has he been here?" she asked in a low voice.

"He only came to-day, but he's a fine

¹ A play similar to tag or prisoner's base.

boy, and I hope you 'll be a good little girl and show him the garden."

But the child's thoughts seemed suddenly to take a new turn, and, sidling up to her mother, she begged to be given a cake. The mother opened the little drawer of the *hibachi*,¹ and, taking out two or three sugar-plums, put them into her hand. The child then, with barely a glance at Bunkichi, ran through the *shoji* out of doors.

"Take care and don't stumble," her mother called out. "Do you mind just seeing after her?" she said to Bunkichi, who at once got up and went out on the veranda.

No sooner was Chocho Wage,² or "Butterfly Curls" (so named from the way in which her hair was dressed), outside in the garden than she began quarreling with the boy from the shop. "No, Sadakichi; I'm not going to play with you.

¹ Pronounced he-bah'chee. A wooden fire-box where a charcoal fire is kept for warming the hands.

² Pronounced Cho'cho Wah'gay.

Mama says that the other boy who has just come is a fine boy, and I'm going to play with him."

"What! another boy has come, has he?"

"Yes; there he is. Go and fetch him."

Sadakichi called to Bunkichi, "You will find some *geta*¹ there, if you will come out."

So Bunkichi came out to the garden.

It was not a very large one, but it was a pretty spot, for beyond it sparkled the bay that lay at the back of Kumano. Bunkichi had soon joined the two others, and Sadakichi, turning to the little child, said, "Well, shall we three play at *oni*?"

"No," she answered; "you are always catching me, and I don't care to play."

"I won't catch you, then, Chocho, if you don't like it."

"All the same, I'd rather not."

A thought struck Bunkichi, and, addressing himself to the child, he said: "Would you like me to make you some-

¹ Pronounced *gay'tah*. Foot-wear or wooden clogs.

thing? I would if I only had a knife and some bamboo."

The child was at once interested, and told Sadakichi to go and get what was wanted. So Sadakichi strolled off and brought a knife and some bamboo chips. "Now, then, what are you going to make?" said he.

"A nice bamboo dragon-fly," Bunkichi answered; and, taking the knife, he split a bit of the bamboo, shaved it fine and smooth, and fixed a little peg in the middle of it.

Sadakichi, quickly guessing what it was, said: "Ah, it's a dragon-fly. I know! I once went with the *banto*¹ to Kada-no-Ura, and every one there was flying those dragon-flies, and, now I think of it, the boy who was selling them looked just like you."

Not a bit disconcerted, Bunkichi replied: "Yes, you are quite right. I was the boy who made them and was selling them."

¹ Clerk.

"Bah! Mr. Dragon-fly-seller!" blustered out Sadakichi, with a face of disgust.

"Don't speak like that," said the little girl, turning sharply upon him, and then to Bunkichi: "What made you sell them?" she asked, speaking out to him for the first time.

"My father was ill in bed," he answered, continuing to scrape the bamboo, "and, as our family was poor, I managed to buy him rice and medicine by selling these dragon-flies."

Child as she was, this touching story of filial piety made her respect Bunkichi all the more.

"Oh, was n't that good of him!" she said, turning to Sadakichi. "Do you think you could have done it?"

"I—yes; only there would have been no need for me to sell dragon-flies. I should have sold the wearing-things in our shop," he answered, arrogantly.

Bunkichi had now finished making the dragon-fly, and, holding it between his hands, he spun it round, and up it went into



“ “ Why, it 's just like a real dragon-fly !' she cried, with delight ”

the air with a whirring sound, and lighted on the ground again some five or six paces away.

“Why, it ’s just like a real dragon-fly!” cried the child, with delight. “Do let me have it!” And, taking it in her hands, she tried to set it flying, but she could only make it go up a little way.

Then Sadakichi, wishing to try his hand, pushed forward. “Let me have it,” he said, “and I ’ll show you how well I can do it”; and, seizing hold of it, with the force of both hands he sent it flying high into the air. “There, now—see how it goes!” and, while the little girl was watching it with delight, the dragon-fly flew over the wall fence and dropped into the water beyond.

The little child ran after it, followed by Sadakichi and Bunkichi. There was a little gate in the garden, opening on a jetty. Through this they passed and stood together on the plank, watching the dragon-fly tossing about on the water.

“Oh, I wish we could get it,” said the

little girl, looking at it wistfully; "if it would only come just in front of us!"

"Take care," said Sadakichi, holding her back, while the dragon-fly, bobbing up and down among the ripples, gradually drifted farther off.

Now Bunkichi, seeing there was a small boat lying alongside the jetty, had said to Sadakichi, "Let me row out and get it," and was drawing the boat toward him, when he was abruptly stopped by Sadakichi. "No, no; you must n't think of putting out from the shore. If you do, you are certain to be eaten up by the *wanizame*." ¹

"Yes, it 's quite true," chimed in the little girl. "There 's a horrid *wanizame* that prevents any one going on the sea. Only yesterday it captured somebody."

"Yes—a young man from the brewery," said Sadakichi. "He had some barrels in his boat, and he had gone only two or three hundred yards when the shark

¹ Pronounced wahi-ne-zah'may, meaning a huge shark.

came up and overturned his boat and seized him."

"It does n't matter about the dragon-fly; I don't want it; let us go back to the house." And the little child, frightened in good earnest, took hold of Bunkichi's arm.

It was the first time Bunkichi had heard about the *wanizame*. "Is it really true, miss, that there is a *wanizame* in the bay?" he asked.

"Yes; I can tell you it's very serious. I don't know how many people it has eaten in the last month."

"Really! But how big is it?"

"I don't know what you would call big," broke in Sadakichi. "But it's about as big as this house. If it sees a small boat, it overtakes it in no time and topples it over, and if it is a big boat it gets in the way and stops it so that it can't move, and so the fishermen can't go out, and no cargo can come into the port. I suppose it must be want of food that has brought it into this harbor; but, however

that may be, it thinks nothing of upsetting the small craft, so that for a month no one has ventured out at all. Well, there was the brewer's man. Yesterday he thought it would be safe to go just a short distance, but he very soon got swallowed up. And what is the consequence? Why, the fishing is stopped, and there 's no trade, and the place is going to ruin. The fishermen and hunters have tried over and over again to kill it with spikes and guns and with all kinds of things. But what is the use? Their weapons only snap in two or glance off its back, and they only get killed themselves. So they have given up trying."

Bunkichi listened to every word, and then suddenly went into the house and stood before the master.

CHAPTER II

BUNKICHI PLANS TO KILL THE SHARK



HE master and his wife were engaged in conversation, but on seeing Bunkichi the merchant said, "Well, have you been to see the garden?"

"Thank you, I have enjoyed it very much," answered Bunkichi, politely.

"Why, bless me, he has all the manners of a little *samurai*¹!" exclaimed the master to his wife. "There is no comparison between him and the other boys. But dancing attendance on a little girl is not the sort of employment for a lad who has the ambition to become the leading merchant in Japan. No, no; he wants to get

¹ Pronounced sahm'oo-rye. The *samurai* were the military class of Japan, corresponding to the knights of the middle ages in European countries.

into the shop as soon as he can and learn the ways of business—eh, my boy?”

The master exactly interpreted Bunkichi's wishes, and Bunkichi felt very grateful to him, but he only answered: “I shall esteem it a great favor to be allowed to serve you in any way. But, master, with your leave, I would ask you: Is it true, as I hear, that there is a *wanizame* lately come into this bay, and that people are suffering a lot of harm from it?”

“Ah, me! Yes, it's a sore trouble, that *wanizame*; our fishermen are doing nothing, our boat traffic is stopped, and if things go on in this way the place will be ruined. All sorts of attempts have been made to kill it, but, alas! all to no purpose.”

Then respectfully, in a kneeling posture, approaching nearer, Bunkichi thus addressed his master: “Master, in the request I am now going to make of you, I fear you will put me down as a child with a vain, childish notion of doing great things; none the less, I am bold to ask you,

in all seriousness, will you give me leave to attempt the destruction of this *wanizame*?"

The master exclaimed in astonishment: "What! You think that you are going to kill the *wanizame*? It would be the greatest thing in the world if you could, but already every means has been tried. Whaling-men have tried to kill it with their harpoons, the hunters of wild game on the mountains have tried to shoot it with their guns; but the *wanizame* has defeated all their schemes, and, to say nothing of the money it has cost, several men have lost their lives in their attempts to kill it, and our citizens have given it up as hopeless. Son of a *samurai* though you may be, this is no task for a boy of thirteen or fourteen. No; you may have seen in the seas around Kada-no-Ura sharks of four or five feet in length, but just go out to the hill above the town and look over the bay until you catch sight of our monster. The very sight of it is enough to terrify most people."

"You mistake me, master," said Bun-kichi, sitting up straight. "I have no thought of trying my strength against the *wanizame*. But I have a trick in my mind I should like to play, if you would allow me."

"Oh, it 's a trick, is it? And what is the trick our crafty youngster is going to propose for killing the *wanizame*, I should like to know?" said the master, smiling.

"The plan I have is simply this: First, to make a straw figure and to fill up the inside with poison. Then I shall dress it in a man's clothes and take it out into the bay, and, when we see the shark coming, throw it out to him to eat. Sharks are senseless creatures and ready to eat anything, so he is sure to swallow the straw man, and if he does the poison will at once take effect and kill him. That's my plan; what do you think of it?"

"Yes; I think your plan of making a straw man is not at all a bad one, and I have little doubt, as you say, that the shark would swallow it. In that case it would

certainly die and we should be free at last from our great calamity. But wait a minute; I am afraid, when the doll is made, there is nobody who will venture to take it out to the sea. People have had so many bitter lessons from trying to kill this shark that, however much money you offer, no one, I fear, will agree to take it out into the bay."

Bunkichi without any hesitation replied: "I will undertake the task of taking the doll out for the shark to swallow. As I grew up by the seaside at Kada-no-Ura, I can row a boat well and can swim better than most people. I saw a boat just now fastened at the jetty in your garden. Please lend it to me and I will go out alone upon the bay."

Astonished by the audaciousness of the lad, the master said: "It is too wild an idea, my boy. What if the shark upsets your boat? He will swallow you up in an instant."

"As to what you say about drowning, that does n't disturb me at all. Suppose

I have no luck and lose my life, there is nothing to be regretted if by my death I succeed in removing the great calamity under which many are now suffering. And, as I said before, it is my determination to become the leading merchant of Japan; but if I am to realize my ambition I must be prepared to run many risks. If fortune favors me I shall come safe through them and attain my object; if, however, this first venture goes against me, and I go out to sea and fall a prey to the *wanizame*, it simply means that I must accept it as the decree of fate, and, as far as my life is concerned, I am quite ready to risk it."

The master, who was much struck by his fearless determination, worthy of the boy's descent, said to him, "Indeed, your magnanimity is greater than ours, but for that very reason we should be all the more sorry to lose you."

Saying this, he turned round to his wife, who whispered in his ear: "I quite agree with you: if he be swallowed up by the

shark, we could n't possibly get another like him; send some other one instead!"

Just then in came the girl, attended by Sadakichi, who had long been waiting for the boy, and said, "Bunkichi, please be quick and make me another dragon-fly."

Her mother, however, at once stopped the girl, saying: "Come, come; Bunkichi has something else to think about besides dragon-flies: he 's just saying that he wants to go out to sea and kill the *wani-same*."

The girl was startled, for she was only a child. "Does he go alone?"

"Yes, that is what he says he will do."

"Don't, please, mother; I don't like your sending him to sea."

"Why, my child?"

"I want him to make me a bamboo dragon-fly."

His curiosity aroused at hearing the little girl speak of the dragon-fly, the father said, "What do you wish him to make for you?"

"Oh, father, it 's a bamboo dragon-fly

—an amusing toy which flies up high, whizzing,” was her confident answer.

“Ah, I see,” he remarked, as he understood the girl’s request; “that flying bamboo thing I often see when I go out on the streets. The toy, I remember, was first made by a boy of great filial virtue in a certain country district, and even here they talk about him; it is clever of you, Bunkichi, to have learned how to make them.”

Then Sadakichi interrupted, saying: “No wonder! Why, he was the hawker of the toy; I know all about it, as I saw him selling it at Kada-no-Ura.”

“Are you, then, the inventor of the toy?” asked the master, to whom the boy at once replied in the affirmative. The master, who was more than ever struck by the boy’s character, said, “Are you, then, the same boy whom all the people talk about and praise for his devotion to his parent?”

Then the girl, who remembered what had been told her a little while before, said: “Father, his family was very poor, and,

as his father was laid up on his sick-bed, he sold those dragon-flies and bought medicine or a little rice for the family. He told me so."

As she was listening to this conversation, tears stood in the mother's eyes, and she said: "He is really a model boy, is he not? I can't possibly let him go to sea."

The master, who was much of the same way of thinking as his wife, answered, "Of course, I have been persuading him to give up his idea"; and, turning to Bunkichi, said, "Yes, do give it up, my boy."

And the girl, seemingly with the intention of inspiring the boy with dread and deterring him from his purpose, remarked solemnly, "Oh, it is dreadful to be swallowed by the shark on going to sea!"

Bunkichi, having once determined, was immovable. "Sir, trading to a merchant is the same that fighting is to a knight. It has been ever regarded honorable in a knight that he should hazard his life many a time, even in his early youth. If fate be against him, he will be put to death by his

enemy. The knights of old faced the dangerous issues of life or death as often as they went out to battle. As they attained to renown by passing through these ordeals, so, too, must the merchant who aspires after a leading position not shrink from braving many dangers in his life. Sir, methinks the present is the opportunity given me to try my hand; and if fate sides with me and I succeed in killing the *wanisame*, in future I shall have courage to venture out on other great undertakings. If one begins to be nervous at the outset, one will go on being nervous forever; but there is no fear, I think, for a man who is ready to sacrifice even his own life."

The master, meeting with such unflinching determination, knew not how to stop him, but said: "I must confess you have more in you than I thought. I am ashamed of myself to be thus taught by you the secret of success in trade when I should be in a position to teach you. Well said, my boy; trading is to a business man

what fighting is to a knight. If you begin by being weak and timid, you will never be capable of bold enterprise. If you have a mind to divine your future by embarking on this exploit, go in for it with all your might. As to the preparations for making the straw man, as far as buying the poison is concerned, I will do it all for you. You had better go up to the mountain yonder, and ascertain the place where the shark is generally to be seen coming up to the surface. You, Sadakichi, had better take him up to the Sumiyoshi¹ bluff, and point him out the monster if it should come up and show itself on the surface of the water in the mouth of the harbor."

Bunkichi, who was much delighted at having gained his wish, said: "Then, sir, please let an apothecary prepare a lot of drugs which are likely to be the best poison for a *wanizame*, and I will go and have a lookout for the appearance of the monster."

As he was about to start, the girl asked

¹ Pronounced Soo-mee-yo'shee.

him, in a little voice of remonstrance, "But when will you make a dragon-fly for me, Bunkichi?"

"When I come back, miss," was his reply.

"Come, come; he can't be bothered about such a trifle now," said her mother.

Meanwhile the two lads, Bunkichi and Sadakichi, hand in hand, went up to the Sumiyoshi bluff, which stood just outside the town on the eastern side of Kumano Bay. The mountain rose precipitously from the sea, whose fathomless water washed its southern base. A thick forest of pines covered the mountain, and the vibrating of their needle foliage in the breeze added a strange harp-like accompaniment to the perpetual roaring of the waves below. On reaching the summit, Bunkichi threw himself down on a knotty root of pine near the edge of a precipice and gazed out on the broad expanse of Kumano Bay. As far as his view reached, no shore could be descried; only the line where the dome of the azure sky circled the deep blue of the ocean.

After sitting thus in silent contemplation for a few minutes, Bunkichi suddenly turned round and said to Sadakichi: "Sea scenery is always fine to look at, is n't it? I am fond of this sort of rough sea. I should like to have a swim in it."

"Don't talk such nonsense; you would no sooner get into it than you would be swamped," was the reply.

"That 's just what I like. I should dive deep down into the water and get out of the whirlpool. And now, tell me where it is the *wanizame* generally pops out its head."

"It generally comes out just below this headland," the other answered, "at the mouth of the harbor."

As the two boys were steadily gazing on the surface of the water, sure enough, up came the shark, and startled Sadakichi by cleaving the water with its back. Whether it was in frolic or in quest of prey, the monster swam to and fro, now showing its head and now its tail. Its rock-like back and its iron-like fins were horrible enough to inspire even men with awe.

Sadakichi, feeling nervous at the sight, said to his companion, "Bunkichi San, now you see the monster, you will be for giving up your grand job, I fancy."

"What! You don't suppose I'm frightened, do you," was his scornful retort, "at the sight of such a little fish?"

"What do you say?" said the other.

"Well, if the chance came in my way, I might even kill a leviathan or a crocodile!"

As these two were thus talking, a gust of wind from the high Nachi Mountain swept down on the forest of Sumiyoshi and awakened the myriad tiny harps of the pines, while the waves rolled one after another against the rocks below. These sounds combined to drown the voices of the lads, one of whom seemed to be persuading the other that it was time to go back, while the other seemed to be insisting on staying a little longer to enjoy the wild scenery and to think over the issues of his scheme.

CHAPTER III

A BOAT CAPSIZED—A HAIRBREADTH ESCAPE



HE master of the Daikokuya, who had been much struck by the wisdom and courage of Bunkichi, lost no time in going to an apothecary to get plenty of the poisonous stuff for the *wanizame*, while he ordered some of his men to prepare the straw dummy.

In course of time the two lads, Bunkichi and Sadakichi, came back from Sumiyoshi bluff. The master welcomed them into his own room, and said:

“How now, Bunkichi? Did you see the shark?”

“Yes, sir, I saw it,” was the reply.

“And now that you have seen the mon-

ster are you less disposed to go out to sea? ”

“ No; on the contrary,” replied the lad, “ I am the more ready to go.”

“ Is n’t that obstinacy on your part? ”

“ Not in the least, sir,” the lad said, as he drew himself up; “ the greater the opponent, the greater the interest and strength that are called for; and I am about to do this at the risk of my life. I well observed the spot where the shark comes up, and noticed a large pine-tree which projects over the sea from the precipice. If some one will let fall a stout rope from one of its branches, I will row over to it, and there I shall entice the shark to swallow the straw dummy; then if the shark, in plunging about, should upset my boat, I shall take hold of the rope and climb or be hauled up the precipice.”

The master, who was once more struck by words which showed so much sagacity as well as courage, said:

“ That ’s a very good idea of yours.

Then this is what we shall decide to do, is it? I shall send out some of my young men to the Sumiyoshi bluff to fix a rope to the pine branch from the precipice, and you will tie the rope to your waist before you go out on your venture. I and others will stand upon the cliff and watch you, and should you be in danger of being swallowed by the monster, we shall lose no time in hauling you up. Is that to be our plan of action?"

"Yes, that 's the plan," was the boy's reply.

"Well, then, I have bought the poison, and can soon have ready as many as three dummies. When do you think of setting out?"

"Now, at once," answered Bunkichi.

"That is rushing it too quickly, my lad. Would n't it be better for you to wait till to-morrow?" remonstrated the master.

"Unless things of this kind are done quickly and made easy work of, some obstacles may arise and frustrate our plans;

so I will just do it with as little concern as you snap your fingers," said the lad.

"You can't do things so lightly as you say," was the master's reply.

And his wife, who had been listening, and who regretted having given her consent to the boy's rash project, added: "Bunkichi, do stay at home to-day and spend it in preparation and do the work to-morrow."

And the little girl also said: "I don't care for your going to sea."

But Bunkichi, having once made up his mind in the matter, was not to be moved by any one's entreaties.

"Then, by your leave, sir," he said, "I will take that little boat at the jetty." And without more delay he rose up to go.

His master knew not how to stop him, but said: "No, no; that small boat is dangerous; and, if you must go, you had better go out in the *temmabune*."¹

"No, sir," said the lad; "the *temma-*

¹ Pronounced Tem-mah-bonn'ay. A larger boat.

bune is too big for me to row alone, so I prefer the small one."

"But I am in great concern about your personal safety if you go alone," said the master. "I will give ten *rio* to any one who will go with you."

Though he quickly made known this offer to the members of his household as well as among his neighbors, no one ventured to offer himself on account of the people's repeated and terrible experiences. Bunkichi soothed his master, saying that he was much freer if left to act by himself than he would be if there were others with him. Quickly putting the three dummies into the small boat outside the garden gate, with marvelous coolness, as if he were going out for pleasure, he said: "Good-by, everybody; I will go now, and be back again soon."

The master, who was first to stir, led out to the jetty some of his young men as well as some strong coolies. Three or four big ropes having been made ready, he said:

"Now, Bunkichi, tie one of these to your waist."

"It 's no use, sir, till I get near the mountain," replied the lad, but the master said:

"But just think, if on your way out the shark should turn up! We shall pull you along the coast while you will row as near as you can to the land."

Bunkichi, who could n't resist the master's persuasion, let him tie the rope round his waist, and the master himself took hold of the end of it and together with others went along the shore toward Sumiyoshi bluff.

Bunkichi, having been brought up at the seaside, was an excellent rower, but as they pulled along the rope he rowed but slightly. Suddenly he took out a dagger which had been handed down from his ancestors and unsheathed it, smiling as he noted the temper of the steel.

Who spread the news no one knew, yet the people in the town came out in a crowd, and every one was surprised to see

a boy, alone in a boat, sallying forth to kill the monster.

"Is n't he a wonderfully courageous boy!"

"He is no common boy. Perhaps he may yet be as famous as our great hero Kato Kiyomasa."¹

"Is n't he cool!"

"Has n't he wonderful presence of mind!"

Such expressions as these escaped from everybody's lips. Thus praising him as they went along, the crowd followed the master.

From among the crowd an old woman stepped out with a rosary in one hand and said to the master:

"Sir, please let me hold the rope, *Namu-Ami-Dabutsu*."²

The young men turned to her and said:

"Ill omen! Don't say such a thing as

¹The conqueror of Korea in 594 A.D.

²An expression used in one of the Buddhistic prayers. Among a certain class of Japanese it was believed that by repeating this phrase frequently their chances of going to heaven were increased.

Namu-Ami-Dabutsu. This is not the rope for you to pull."

In spite of the taunt she still muttered the sacred charm of the Buddha sect, saying:

"But do let me hold it. I am the leader in pulling timbers for the repairing of the Hongwanzi¹ temple. Yet I must have my share, because I am sure that the lad is a hero sent by Buddha himself to save us from our troubles. *Namu-Ami-Dabutsu,*" repeated the woman.

Just then a maid-servant carrying a little girl on her back came along the shore after the woman. The latter turned to the little girl and said:

"Ah, you are the daughter of the Dai-kokuya. Do you want to pull this rope, too? *Namu-Ami-Da—*"

The girl would n't listen to her words, but, looking intently at the boat in the distance, called out aloud, "Bunkichi!"

The other bystanders, who heard the name for the first time, said: "Ah, his

¹ The headquarters of the Buddhist religion in Kioto.

name is Bunkichi, is it?" and at once shouted, "Bunkichi Daimiozin," which is a title they give to the gods.

The lad, taking little notice of the stir on the shore, soon came to the foot of the bluff. The master and others went up the hillside along the edge of the precipice, while the lad began to prepare for his task.

The long summer day was already declining and a cool breeze from the far ocean blew about his broad sleeves, and the voice of the crowd grew fainter and fainter as, hidden by the pine-trees, they wound their way up to the top of the hill. Yet now and then Bunkichi heard his master's voice faintly calling to him, to which he made reply to assure him of his safety. Looking out toward the ocean there was no sail or boat to be seen, probably owing to the people's fear of meeting the shark. A checkered bank of white and dark clouds was massed on the sky above the horizon, while the waves chased one another below.

Any ordinary man would have quailed at such a scene as this; but Bunkichi, with no sign of nervousness, put the straw figures in the bow of the boat and proceeded toward the place where the shark usually made its appearance. He could now see the master and others above the precipice as they began attaching the rope to a strong limb of the sturdy pine which projected seaward. Thus all the preparations were made for hauling him up at the given signal, while the lad was also preparing himself for the encounter and reconnoitering the scene from his boat.

At last the iron-like fin of the monster was seen to cleave the water. Apparently rejoiced at the sight of a man, as Bunkichi's figure must have been now and then reflected on the water, the shark in quest of prey raised its head above the water and made for the boat.

"Come on, you villain," muttered the lad, who stood up in the bow with the dummy in his hand.

The terror-stricken young men at the

top of the precipice no sooner saw the monster than they were on the point of pulling up the rope; but the master stayed them, saying: "Steady, men, steady! Wait till he gives us a signal."

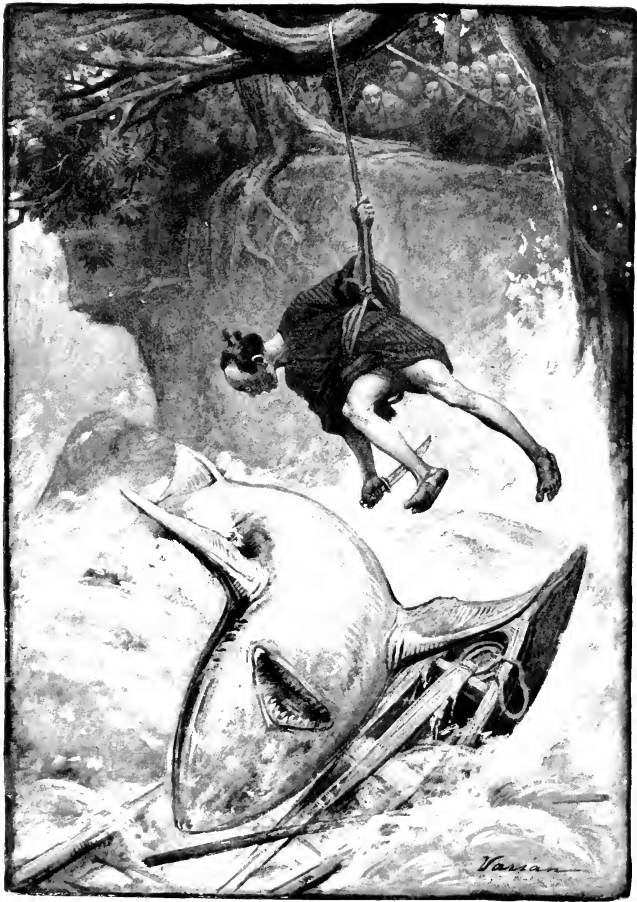
The master anxiously watched the lad's action, while the crowd hardly breathed as they stood still with hands clenched.

With a splash, Bunkichi threw the figure in the way of the *wanizame*; the shark turned over, the white portion of its body gleamed, and it snapped the stuffed figure, drawing it under the water. Up it came again, and the lad threw out the second dummy; but the monster did not take any notice of it, but made straight for the lad. Above, on the top of the precipice, the master awaited Bunkichi's signal with breathless interest, but no signal was given yet. With his dagger drawn in one hand and raising the third straw figure in the other, Bunkichi threw it at the enemy's head. Whether it was that the poison was already taking effect or that the charm of the noted sword frightened the

monster, it turned back on a sudden and retreated a few yards. Before the anxious crowd could divine the next movements of the shark, it began to plunge about in and out of the water on the farther side of the boat. Then, seemingly in agony, it swam about with almost lightning speed, now toward the shore and now toward the ocean, and the sea became like a boiling whirlpool in which the little boat seemed every moment in danger of being overwhelmed.

Bunkichi, who saw his plan had succeeded, at once began to row back. At this juncture, as fate would have it, the monster made a sudden dash at the boat, which was at once overturned. The signal had hardly been given when, after a moment of awful anxiety, the lad was in the air, suspended by the rope. The monster again made a mad rush, only to bruise its head against a rock, and with weakened strength returned toward the deep, riding on the retreating tide.

As for Bunkichi, the rope was drawn



“The lad was in the air, suspended by the rope”

up steadily and with care, and he soon found himself safely perched on the stout branch of the pine.

The master of the Daikokuya, when he saw Bunkichi once again on solid ground, never uttered a word, but took his hand and put it on his forehead in token of his unutterable gratitude, while tears of joy flowed from his eyes. The others knew not how to do otherwise on the sudden alternation from dread to joy.

After a while Bunkichi left the crowd and went to the most commanding position on the precipice and gazed down upon the sea, and saw the shark on its back floating to and fro, the sport of the waves. His joy knew no bounds, and he said:

“I thank you all; I have been saved by your help. The shark now seems to be dead.”

These words he uttered with his customary coolness, showing that he had not been at all frightened by the terrible experience he had passed through, while

the others could hardly yet shake off the dread they had felt.

Addressed thus by the lad, the master now recovered his speech, and said:

“No; it is n’t *you* who have been saved by *us*, but *we* who have all been saved by *you*. The shark dies and the people live, or the shark lives and the people must die. I have no words to express my gratitude to you. And now we must get back as soon as possible and let the people know the joyous news.”

While the master thus hurried the others to go back, Bunkichi stopped him and said: “Sir, if we leave the shark as it is, it may revive. It is a pity to leave it, now that it is as good as killed. Let us haul it up by the aid of the rope. It seems that the boat, which was upset, has drifted to the base of the bluff. Let some of us get down and bail the water out of it, and I will, with the help of you all, try to secure the shark.”

The master agreed to the proposal and called for volunteers, but in vain. Some

young fellows pretended to be ill, and others suspected the shark might yet be alive and swallow them if they went near it.

At last, however, the master prevailed on a few of them to go down with the lad to help him.

CHAPTER IV

THE TABLES TURNED



UNKICHI, with the help of a few others, set the boat up, and, bailing the water out, got in and went out again to sea. Putting a rope round the body of the shark, which was being tossed about by the waves, they drew it close to the foot of the bluff. While Bunkichi by himself rowed back home, the young men dragged the dead monster along the coast toward the Daikokuya. The crowd on the bank applied themselves as one man to the task, and got hold of the rope, and the shark was finally landed. Amusing it was to see that old woman pull hard along with the rest.

After this heroic deed the reputation of Bunkichi spread through the length and

breadth of Kumano town, and he was nicknamed as the *Wanizame-Kozo*, or Shark-Boy; but who started the name no one can tell. His exploit, however, was soon carried to the ear of *Odaikan*,¹ and this great person himself came down to the shore and made a thorough inspection of the monster. Ten pieces of silver were awarded by the lord of the province to Bunkichi in recognition of his noble services in putting a stop to the scourge of the town. The master was proud of Bunkichi, and the town people rejoiced at his good fortune.

The size of the shark which the lad killed was more than three *ken*, or some eighteen feet in length, and its skin was so hard that the sharpest sword could not pierce it. The dealers in swords vied with one another in the offers they made the master for the skin, for they knew it would make an excellent binding for sword-hilts. Bunkichi asked his master to sell it, and the transaction was soon

¹ The name given to the local magistrate in olden days.

made, and the master handed over the whole of the price to Bunkichi as the fruit of his brave deed. The lad would not even touch it. He had heard, he said, that the fishermen in the neighborhood, from not being able to go out as hitherto on account of the shark, were in great straits even for their daily food, and therefore he wished to distribute the money among them. The proposal was at once accepted, and the money was divided either among the people who had suffered on account of the shark, or among the bereaved families whose members had fallen victims to its voracity.

That Bunkichi was possessed of courage, his actions had abundantly proved; the people were now profoundly struck by his moral virtue since they had received his alms. The name of *Wanizame-Kozo* soon got its suffix *Sama*, or its equivalent in English of "Mr.," and whenever he appeared in the streets everybody, whether personally known to him or not, seemed to thank him by making him the most courteous obeisances.



V

“ Putting a rope round the body of the shark ”

In course of time, as the people in remote country places came to hear of Bunkichi's exploit, they pressed in large numbers to the shop of the Daikokuya, not so much to buy clothing as for the purpose of seeing the little hero's face. From that day the master doubled the amount of his daily receipts, as his trade prospered. Because of the prosperity brought to the house by the lad, the household of the Daikokuya accorded him special treatment, quite different from that given the other boys in the shop; in fact, he was treated as if he were the son of the family. But Bunkichi, on his part, served his master better than the other boys were able or willing to. In spite of his master's forbidding him, he was first on the scene in the morning to sweep the street in front of the shop and to put the shop in order and to sell goods to customers however early they might come. Then, having carefully settled accounts at the close of the day, he would devote his evenings to the mastery of the abacus and to writing Chinese characters. His praise-

worthy behavior impressed everybody who saw or heard him.

Two or three months passed in this way, and the lad's fame became ever greater, and further prosperity was brought to the house. Then the master took counsel of his wife:

"As we have n't any boys, Chocho being the only child we have, sooner or later we shall have to adopt a son. I don't care to have any one of whose intentions and character I know nothing. Rather it would please me to have Bunkichi as our foster-son. What do you think about this?"

His wife said gladly:

"I agree with you, my husband; he would be just the one to whom to leave the conduct of the business, and if we could make him our adopted son, what a pleasure it would be! You had better do it quickly."

The master pondered awhile and then said:

"But, you see, he hopes to become the

leading merchant in Japan, and thereby to raise the name of his ancestors; therefore he would not like to be adopted into another family. This would be the first hitch in the arrangement, I fancy."

"No, my dear; our intention, of course, is to give him the whole of this our property—and that certainly should be sufficient inducement to any one."

"No, I think not," said the other, as he put his head on one side in contemplation; "he is not the boy who will prize such a small property as ours. I don't care to run the risk of humbling myself by speaking to him rashly. What I want is to ascertain his intention at some opportune moment."

Sadakichi, who had been playing in company with the little girl on the veranda outside the *shoji*, first heard this conversation, and one day told Bunkichi about it. The latter said to himself:

"My intention has been to win fame and thereby to raise our ancestors' name, so it would never do for me to be adopted

into another family. Trouble will come if I stay here any longer, and I shall be put in such a strait that I shall feel obliged to fall in with this proposal." So he thought he would do best to leave the house quickly and try his hand independently at some trade.

One evening he sought his master and said:

"Sir, it is rather an abrupt request to make of you, but I have conceived a plan by which I can earn money; so please let me trade by myself. As capital to start with, it will be sufficient for me to employ those silver coins which I received for reward and which you have kept for me."

The master, without knowing the lad's secret intention, said: "If you wish to trade on your own account, I will lend you capital or give you any help you want; but what is the plan you have in mind?"

"It 's simply this, sir. Since the disappearance of the *wanizame* the people nowadays get an abundant catch of fish, and in consequence I hear there is a scarcity of fishing-tackle, nets, and their be-

longings. So I wish to go up to Osaka and get a supply."

The master made one clap with his hands in token of his approval, and said:

"Well thought of, my lad! If you get a supply from Osaka now, you are sure to reap a good profit. Besides, all the fishermen round about here received your alms and regard you as one of the gods. If they hear of your selling fishing-tackle, they will gladly come to purchase of you. But you cannot transact the business by yourself alone, so I will send some one to assist you, and also I will lend you as much capital as you wish. Therefore, go and make whatever investment you think necessary."

Bunkichi did not wish to receive this favor, as he intended trading without the help of any one.

"Sir, let me trade with my own capital alone without any other help in this instance," he replied. "Only, when the cargo comes, will you please give it store-room for me?"

As the master knew Bunkichi would not

be induced to accept others' advice when he had definitely made up his mind, he said:

"Very well, then; you may try to manage for yourself. No other boy of your age could transact the business, but probably you may succeed." Thus saying, he went himself and brought a packet of money.

"This is the money I have been keeping for you." And then he produced another packet which contained fifty pieces of silver, saying:

"This is only a trifling recognition of your services in the shop, by which we have enjoyed much prosperity; I hope you will accept it."

Bunkichi again and again refused to accept this additional gift, but in vain, for the master almost forced him to receive it, and said:

"When you come back from Osaka, you will stay again with us, won't you?"

Bunkichi hesitated and stammered out:
"Yes, sir; I might trouble you again,

though I intend to continue in some trade of my own."

"Of course you may go in for whatever trade you like, and if you can conveniently carry on your trade while you stay at my house, please make yourself at home in it, and do not think that you need help in my shop on that account."

As Bunkichi had no other home, he accepted this kind offer for his future protection after his return, and the next day, when he had prepared himself for the journey, he left the Daikokuya for Osaka.

Though he was a boy in appearance, his mind was equal to that of a full-grown man. At the time of his leave-taking, the master was insisting on getting him a through *kago*, or Japanese palanquin, to Osaka, which he had refused as unnecessary. In his courageous onward march he came to a lonely part of the road; he was, however, well used to traveling, owing to those early days of wandering when he sold the dragon-flies for the support of his family, and by the experience

of his lonely journey to Kumano. But in this present journey, as he carried with him a great sum of money in his pocket, he felt somewhat encumbered and could not walk as lightly as he wished.

On the afternoon of the day when he came to the mountainous region he was well-nigh tired out, and he hired a *kago* to carry him. The coolies no sooner put him into the palanquin than they started off at almost a running pace, and after a short time they turned off from the highway into a bypath. The lad called out, in suspicion:

“Are n’t you taking a rather strange road?”

Both coolies answered in one voice:

“This is a short cut, lad.”

As they went on they got more and more into the wilds of the mountains, and Bunkichi thought to himself that they might belong to that class of rascals who prey on the traveler’s pockets. Nevertheless it was too late to do anything against them, so he kept himself in perfect peace

by determining not to show that he suspected them.

When the coolies were come to a trackless thicket, they put the *kago* down, and, thinking to pull out the boy, looked in and found him fast asleep.

They stared at one another in astonishment and said: "Why, he is sleeping! The fellow takes life easy, eh? Come, my boy, get up! get up!" and one of them poked him on the shoulder, and the other, taking hold of his foot, pulled him out.

Bunkichi rubbed his eyes and yawned twice or thrice.

"Well, Mr. Coolie,—I mean you two, —what 's the matter?"

The coolies said somewhat fiercely: "Look here; you 've got some money with you, have n't you?"

He answered in perfect coolness, as if nothing had happened, "Yes, I have."

They thought more and more the lad was a pretty easy simpleton to deal with, and said: "We knew you had some fifty or sixty *rio*, and that is why we brought

you here. Come, now, hand out all you 've got, for if you refuse you 'll suffer for it."

The lad burst out into laughter, saying: "If you want the money you shall have it"; and he took out the wrapped package of money and threw it down in front of them.

The coolies, seeing the perfect composure of the lad, wondered who this boy could be, and they began to grow nervous, and one of them said in a whisper to the other: "May he not be a fox?"

"We don't know but what this money may turn into tree-leaves," was the answer, and both looked into the boy's face.

The boy said, as he smiled: "You cowardly thieves, are you afraid?"

He stepped out a pace before them, while they stepped back a little and said, "We are not afraid," visibly suppressing their fear.

The lad peered into their faces. "If you are n't afraid, why do you tremble so?"

"We 're cold; that is why."



“ As though they were stricken by thunder at the boy’s words,
down they tumbled on the ground ”

“You cowards! Take the money and be gone!”

The coolies looked at each other, and would n't take the money up into their hands, while the lad stood firmly grasping the hilt of the dagger of Kiku-ichimonji within his pocket, ready to fight it out in case they might treat him roughly.

They were thoroughly outwitted by the audacity of the lad, and said: “Where have you come from?”

“Kumano is my home.”

One of them turned pale. “Why, maybe he is the Shark-Boy!”

“Yes, I am that very boy,” retorted the lad.

No sooner did the coolies hear this than they cried with one voice: “Let us up and be gone!” As they were about to turn on their heels, Bunkichi said, as he drew his dagger:

“If you run off I will cut you in two.”

As though they were stricken by thunder at the boy's words, down they tumbled on the ground, and could not rise in spite

of themselves. "Only spare our lives, if you please!"

As they begged for mercy, the lad coldly smiled, saying: "What is it you fear?"

"Please spare us! We cannot bear the thought that you will finish us off as you did the *wanizame*," they gasped in a trembling voice. These coolies had heard of his brave deed in killing the shark, and they thought that he had killed it by a feat of swordsmanship, and that he was a warrior general like him of Ushiwaka-maru¹ of old. He at once perceived what was the cause of their fear, and said:

"Are you weaker than the *wani*?"

"No, sir; we sha'n't be beaten by the *wani*,"—though they still trembled.

Bunkichi resheathed his short sword as he said: "Then take me to where we agreed."

With a prompt "Yes, sir," they rose up, while the lad got into the palanquin. They

¹ A boy hero who learned fencing from a mountain elf in the wilderness of Atago.

took up the money and nervously brought it to the lad, who said as he glanced at it:

“Put it on the top of the *kago*.”

“We ’re afraid it may drop down unnoticed,” was their answer.

“It ’s too heavy for me to carry; tie it somewhere where it will be safe.”

Then the coolies tightly tied the package to the pole by which the *kago* was carried. He did not take the money with him again, for fear that they might harm him in case their avaricious temper got the upper hand and they should make off with it.

The coolies, however, had no courage left to renew their attempt; but they went on most solemnly and steadily, as though they were carrying the *tengu*.¹ Bunkichi, finding the situation rather too quiet and tame, addressed them: “Do you often play the part of villains?”

“No, sir. It was the first time, sir. We were tempted to the wickedness when we saw you were carrying a lot of money; we knew it by your manner of walking.”

¹ A mountain elf.

"I don't believe you. I suspect you have committed villainous acts a good many times, but henceforth there must be an end of them."

"Yes, sir; we have had a lesson and sha'n't try that game again!"

The lad laughed and said: "That is interesting!" This was a peculiar exclamation he used often to make.

Meanwhile Bunkichi came to a certain station where he got out of the *kago*. He gave the coolies something extra to their fare, while warning them against the continuance of their evil practices.

No sooner had they got their money than they slunk away as quickly as they could.

CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE OF STONE MISSILES—THE MONKEYS' PANIC



HAVING stayed that night at an inn, Bunkichi hastened on his way along the Hama-Kaido, or the "shore road."

When he came to a lonely spot in the road, he saw a man in the distance, scantily clad, apparently making preparations for hanging himself. On ran Bunkichi and caught hold of the man, asking him at the same time why he had come to such a pass as to attempt suicide.

"I am a certain Kichidayu, a native of Sakai in Izumi Province, and a sailor," answered the man, while tears stood in his eyes as he spoke. "I was in charge of a ship of one thousand *koku*,¹ and on my

¹ Forty thousand gallons.

voyage to Yedo with a cargo of *sake*¹ my boat was wrecked off this coast and the crew of eighteen, all told, as well as the whole of the cargo, were lost. Fortunately I was washed up on the coast while I was holding fast to a piece of board, but having been terribly knocked about, I can hardly drag myself along. Besides, the loss of the ship, the cargo as well as the crew, overpowers me with such a sense of disgrace and wretchedness that I thought I would rather die than go back to my native town."

Bunkichi, while he was listening to the sad account of the wreck, surveyed the man from head to foot, and perceived many severe bruises, which—with his honest manner of speaking—seemed to prove the truth of his words.

"I quite sympathize with you in your misfortune," said he, "but, my man, your dying will not bring back the ship which was wrecked nor the men who were lost; so I think it would be better for you to

¹ A kind of Japanese liquor.



“ Giving him a helping hand, Bunkichi led the man
along to the next village ”



keep yourself alive and atone for your loss by succeeding with your next venture. But without money you can't even go to a doctor. So allow me—"

Taking out five pieces of silver and putting them in the hand of the sailor, he continued, kindly and soothingly, "With these get a doctor at once, my man."

The captain, as he looked into Bunkichi's face with an expression almost of worship, said: "You are the kindest man I ever came across, in spite of your apparent youthfulness. As long as I live I shall not forget you, and some day, perhaps, I may have an opportunity to repay you for your goodness to me."

While he said this, tears rushed from his eyes—for he was overcome by a sense of gratitude and joy.

Bunkichi, having taken off his *haori*,¹ said to the man: "Put this on, though it is not sufficient to protect you, and come on with me to my next stopping-place." Though the seaman was reluctant to ac-

¹ A Japanese upper garment.

cept so generous an offer, Bunkichi urged him, and, giving him a helping hand, led the man along to the next village, where they found an inn, into which they went. There a suit of clothes was purchased for the sailor, and the lad recounted the story of the wreck to the old woman, the keeper of the inn, and asked her to send for a doctor, who on arrival did whatever he could for the poor man.

Bunkichi, who thought it likely he might be of more service to the sailor, said, in answer to his question: "I have no house of my own, but you will find me if you ask for one Bunkichi at the Daikokuya, a cloth establishment at Kumano. You, being a sailor, are sure to find any amount of work if you go there; so please look me up. I am in a hurry; I cannot stop here longer. On my way back from Osaka I shall call upon you. If you are well before then, you had better go to Kumano and wait for me there."

Thus kindly holding out hopes of helping him in the future, he gave the old wo-

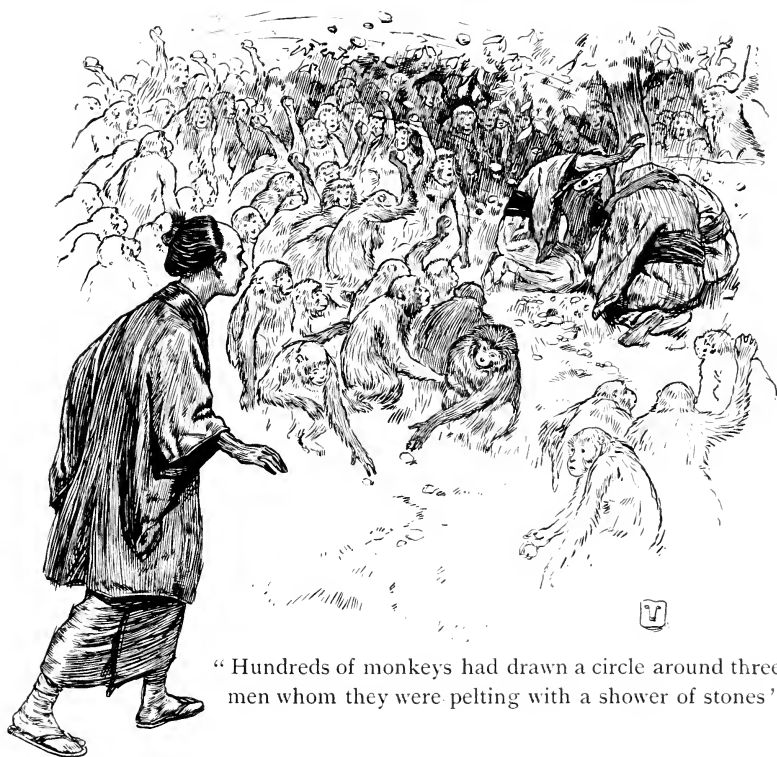
man a sum of money for the nursing of the sailor, and hurried on his way.

Going on from one hotel to another, and resolving to lose no time, Bunkichi at last arrived in the city of Osaka. As he had received a letter of introduction from his master to a certain wholesale merchant of the city, with whom the Daikokuya had dealings, he went to this merchant and asked for the articles he had been commissioned to buy. The head of the house, acquainted with the *wanizame* affair by the letter, did everything in his power to assist Bunkichi, and the transaction went off smoothly and quickly. After he had sent off the fishing-tackle to Kumano on board a ship, he spent a few days in sight-seeing as well as in observing the ways in which big merchants carried on their trade. Having thus spent four or five days here, Bunkichi once more took the same road home, and on the way inquired at the inn after the captain whom he had left there. To his great joy, the sailor was well on the way to recovery;

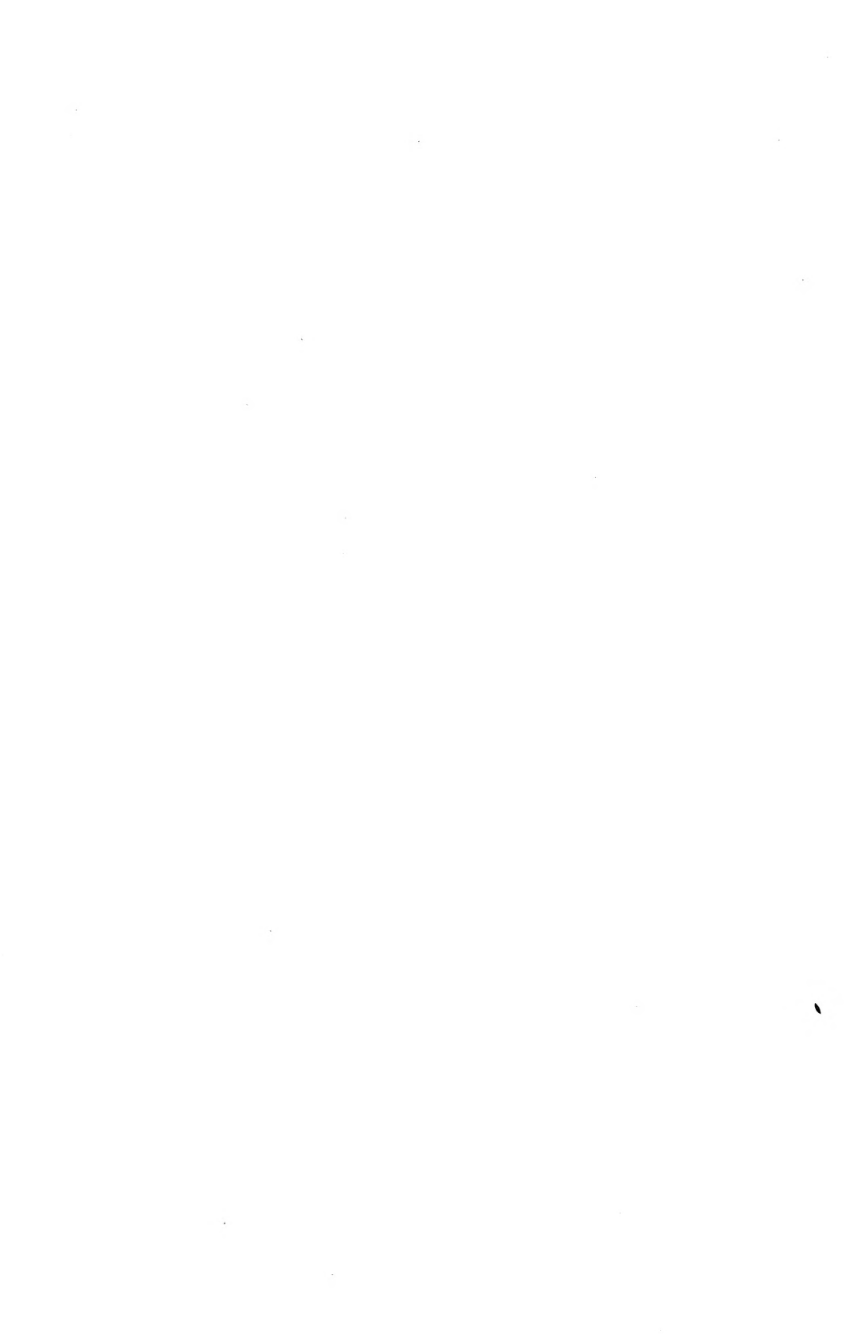
so he gave the man some more money for his further needs, and hastened on to Kumano-Ura, having promised to meet him again there.

On the day following that on which he had taken leave of the sailor, he came to the hilly roads near Kumano. This part of the country was noted then, as it is to-day, for the production of oranges. All over the hills he saw orange-trees in abundance, and there, strange enough, he heard a great noise of screaming and chattering. He hastened his steps in the direction of the noise. Lo, and behold! Hundreds of monkeys, uncountable, had drawn a circle around three men, whom they were pelting with a shower of stones. These wretched men, as they were apparently unable to withstand the stone missiles of the monkeys, had pulled their overcoats, or *haori*, over their heads and were crouching under an orange-bush, apparently in despair, for they were doing nothing but crying for help.

As the animals apparently thought it



“ Hundreds of monkeys had drawn a circle around three men whom they were pelting with a shower of stones ”



great fun, they kept on showering stones as quickly as they could pick them up, and it seemed probable that the three men would have fallen victims to the monkeys but for Bunkichi. When he saw how things were going, quick as thought he picked up a lot of pebbles from the wayside and filled both his spacious sleeves and his front pocket as well. Thus well armed, on he rushed to the monkey army and pulled out of his pocket the pebbles, one after another, throwing them at the frisky creatures. The monkeys, as they screamed and chattered, at once confronted the lad, and, perceiving him pull out stones from his breast, they tried to do the same. But of course they had no pockets with stones in them, while Bunkichi threw his missiles thick and fast. The beasts in their rage began to pull off the hair from their breasts and throw it from them, while their monkey-chatter grew louder and louder as their pain increased.

Bunkichi, who could not suppress his laughter, contrived, as it were, to dis-

charge the missiles from his breast while actually bringing out the stones from his sleeves. As the monkeys drew closer to him, still pulling off their hair, the three men were now given time to breathe. They at once came out from their hiding-place, and, scolding the monkeys, began to pick up stones to help in their turn their deliverer in his stand against them.

The youth cried out, as he quickly perceived their action: "No! No! Don't *pick up* stones! If any of you have the instruments for striking fire, set fire as quickly as you can to the dry grass." The men did as they were told, and as the wind fanned the fire the smoke and flames soon spread over the ground. The army of monkeys, thinking the day was lost, set up a great chatter and, jumping from tree to tree, disappeared.

The men now recovered from their fright, and, having put out the fire, thanked Bunkichi and said: "We are most grateful to you, sir. If you had not come we should almost to a certainty have been stoned to death by the monkeys."

"It was a narrow escape, was n't it?" remarked Bunkichi, "but I am curious to know—did you not throw stones at them first?"

"Yes," replied the men, with animated expression.

Bunkichi could not help smiling as he thought of how they had acted, and said: "You know monkeys are foolish animals and try to imitate whatever others do."

"You seem to know everything," said the men, who were much struck by his wisdom. "But where have you come from?"

"I live at Kumano," was the reply, "but was brought up at Kada-no-Ura; so I know about monkeys, as we have plenty of them there."

Then the leading one of the three, making a polite bow, urged Bunkichi, saying: "I am the owner of this orange farm, and my home is not far from here. Please come to my house."

On the way thither he asked the boy his name and where his home was.

"I am one Bunkichi in the establish-

ment called the Daikokuya, at Kumano," was his frank answer.

The host, having well observed the lad's face, said: "Ah, that 's why I thought I had seen you somewhere. Then you are that widely famed Mr. Wanizame-Kozo, the Shark-Boy! The people in this neighborhood owe you a great debt of gratitude, because all the fruits produced here in this part, oranges among other things, when they are sent either to Tokio or to Osaka, must first be sent to Kumano-Ura to be shipped to those cities. But ever since the appearance of that monster in the harbor, all the shipping trade had come entirely to a standstill, and we had to send our fruits to other ports by a roundabout way, which was a great nuisance to us; whereas, owing to your wisdom and courage, we can now send our cargo to Kumano as we did before."

After a pleasant visit of an hour or two, Bunkichi was about to start. The host stopped him for a minute and brought out a little packet of money, and, placing it be-

fore him, said: "This trifle is only a token of my gratitude to you. Please take it." Looking at it from the outside, it certainly seemed no trifle; but the lad firmly but politely declined to accept it, saying: "You have no need to thank me." And he would not take it, in spite of the host's earnest entreaty. At last he said: "I don't wish to receive any recompense from you; however, I have one favor to ask if you will grant it me. I am thinking of trading on my own account before long in various articles, and if I come here some day to buy oranges, will you deal with me?"

"You make a very modest request," answered the host with ready assent. "I will supply you with a cargo as cheaply as possible at any moment you send me the order, and as to the payment, I shall be in no hurry for it; you may pay me whenever you like. I can supply you with thirty thousand boxes of oranges from my own farm; and there are many more farmers in the neighborhood who will be glad to supply you if I let them know that

you are the Wanizame-Kozo. At least I can assure you I will fill your order, however large it may be."

With many thanks, Bunkichi took his leave and was back in the Daikokuya that evening.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT HAZARD—A PERILOUS VOYAGE



HE cargo of fishing-tackle which had been sent from Osaka had already arrived at Kumano and was awaiting his return, so Bunkichi took his goods to the fishing villages round about Kumano for sale. The people vied with one another in buying them, on account of their being sold by Mr. Shark-Boy. Owing to the price of tackle being then much higher than at other times, as a result of the scarcity of the supply, he made such a good sale that the profit doubled the cost of his outlay.

Taking care not to waste the money thus obtained, he next opened a trade in oranges, buying them at a cheap rate from

the owner of the orange farm and retailing them at Kumano when the market value was high. By this means he made another good profit; still he stayed on in the Daikokuya as his temporary home, and applied himself to business. Thus by the end of the next year he had saved several times the amount of his original capital.

Meanwhile Kichidayu, the sailor to whom he had given kind help, came to him after he had completely recovered. Bunkichi asked the master of the Daikokuya to employ him. He consented, and committed to him, in the capacity of captain, the management of a big ship.

Now Kichidayu's devotion to Bunkichi was so great that he was ready to sacrifice his own life for his sake if occasion should arise. "I admire your determination immensely, and as I owe my life to you, you may count on me for any assistance in my power," said the sailor to the boy one day.

Bunkichi rejoiced on hearing this and

said, laughingly: "When the time comes in which I shall make my fortune, such property as the Daikokuya possesses I will create in ten days."

Four years had passed, during which time Bunkichi had done well in his business, trading in various articles, and a portion of his profit he now and then distributed among the poor people in the district. He was now eighteen years of age. It was the autumn of the year, and from the beginning of the month of October a westerly wind had been blowing many days. As a consequence, the shipping trade at Kumano-Ura was entirely stopped. Yet a cargo of oranges bound from Kii Province for Yedo¹ was accumulating at Kumano-Ura and beginning to rot away on account of the warm climate of the province. From Yedo had been received vain messages, by the *hikiaku*, or running postmen, urging them to send up the oranges, the necessary fruit for the *Fuigo Matsuri*, or

¹ The old name of the great Japanese city now called Tokio.

bellows festival, which was then at hand. Yet the sea became rougher every day as the wind grew stronger, while the frowning autumn sky hung overhead. The people could not possibly put out any ship nor do anything but stare and grumble at the rough sea and the lowering clouds.

Every day Bunkichi went down to the seashore also, and looked at the dark sky as every one else did, yet he alone had a certain expression of suppressed joy in his face. The others said, "We hope this stormy weather will come to an end soon," while he answered, "I hope it will do nothing of the kind."

They were surprised at this and said, "Why, what 's the matter with you?"

"Who can tell?" he answered, laughing. While he was thus engaged in casual talk, Kichidayu, the sailor, came to look at the condition of the sea. On seeing him the lad beckoned him aside by a tree and said: "Kichidayu San, when do you suppose this wind will cease?"

"I wish it would stop soon," he an-

swered, "but it does n't look like it, I fear."

"No, I shall be greatly disappointed if it stops within two or three days."

"Well, there 's not much chance of its doing so," was the sailor's answer.

"That 's good," the boy replied. "Before it stops what do you say to having a sail in a boat from here to Yedo? It would be fine, would n't it?"

Kichidayu stared at Bunkichi in astonishment and said: "Don't joke, please. If we were to put out a boat in this rough sea, it would capsize in no time."

"That 's just where the interest lies. Would n't Kichidayu San like to try it for once?" said the lad, while the other replied, laughing, "Don't carry your joking too far!"

Bunkichi became serious. "Kichidayu San, I 'm not joking. If it was an east or a north wind it would be difficult, of course, but being a west wind, it's a fair wind toward Yedo, however strong it may be, and so there is no reason

why we should not be able to get to Yedo."

Kichidayu, who thought that Bunkichi was saying rather a strange thing, answered: "If we should have good luck, I don't say that it 's impossible; however, I do say it could only be a question of good luck."

"That 's just where the interest lies," said the lad again. "One can do anything that others can do. But it 's a fine thing for a man to go to a place when others can't go. Kichidayu San, the time has now come to make that fortune of money of which I told you once, because in Yedo the price of oranges, which are one of the necessities of the bellows festival, has gone up ten times higher than at other times, on account of the scarcity of the fruit. Here, in this port, where the oranges have accumulated because they can find no customers, the price has gone down ten times lower than the rate at which they usually sell. So, if we can buy at a price ten times lower than the

usual rate, and sell at a price ten times higher than the usual rate, naturally a hundred *rio* will make ten thousand *rio*. There is n't likely to come such a good chance twice in a lifetime. As to the ship, I will ask the master of the Daikokuya to let me have a big one, and if he does, will you captain it for me? I intend to take out in it a large cargo of oranges to Yedo while this bad weather prevails." The lad thus for the first time revealed his ambitious scheme.

Kichidayu folded both his arms on his breast in contemplation. Then, as he lifted his head, he said: "I will make the attempt—yes, even to Yedo, for your sake; I don't grudge even my life. What if my ship gets wrecked? I don't care. But are you thinking of coming on board?"

"Of course; if I don't go, the business can't be effected," said Bunkichi. "Trading is the same as a battle. In one of the battles of old the warrior Yoshisune set us an example by attacking the army of

the Hei clan in the province of Shikoku by sending out the war vessels from Dai-motsuga-Ura on a stormy night. If we lose courage in such weather as this, we cannot possibly accomplish any great scheme. We shall enter upon it resolutely. Should we die, let us die together. If I gain my object, I will handsomely reward you.

“We shall have to offer sailors ten times their usual pay,” continued Bunkichi; “you may then, perhaps, find fellows who will be willing to come. Will you be responsible for finding them?” So saying, he gave the captain money for the purpose, and, having intrusted the matter to him, at once went home to the Daikokuya and saw the master.

“Danna,” said he, “among your ships the oldest is that *Tenjin-maru*¹ of one thousand *koku* burthen, is it not?”

The master, who was somewhat startled by the abruptness of the question, said: “Yes, she is getting to be an old

¹ A Japanese junk.

vessel now, and I am thinking of breaking her up."

"Will you sell her to me?"

To which the master answered: "If you want her, I don't mind making you a present of her; but what use will you put her to?"

"I 'm thinking of taking a cargo of oranges to Yedo," was the lad's reply.

"When the bad weather is over, I suppose?" said the master.

"No; while this stormy weather is prevailing," was the reply.

The master was startled, but gazing on the boy for a moment, merely remarked: "What an extraordinary idea!"

After a little hesitation, Bunkichi drew nearer to the master. "Pray, master, sell her to me," said he; "I am again going out on a trading battle."

Then the master understood his real intention and said: "Well, if you are so minded, you may not be afraid of this storm; but the *Tenjin-maru* is in any case a dangerous ship for this weather; so I

will lend you one which is more seaworthy."

"No, thank you, sir; I have no wish to borrow," replied the lad. "This undertaking is a matter of fate. If I am wrecked on the way out I cannot give you your ship back again; so I shall not borrow things of others, for I wish to do everything on my own capital."

The master knew the boy's nature and made no further objection, but said: "Very well, I will sell her to you. You will surely succeed. Come back again laden with treasure!"

Chocho, the master's daughter, who was now sixteen years of age, overheard the conversation between the two and was much surprised, and expressed her anxiety as well as her sorrow in her face, and said: "Does Bunkichi go to Yedo in this storm?" The mother, too, longed to stop him, but could not well interfere, because her husband had already yielded his sanction to the boy's scheme. She only said, loud enough to be heard by both, as she

answered her daughter: "Yes, Cho, it is most dangerous to go out to sea in this great wind and storm!" To which the girl responded: "Yes, mother!"

Bunkichi, having paid the price of the *Tenjin-maru* to his master, went to the wholesale stores which were best known to him and bought up their oranges. The merchants, as they were sore oppressed by the rotting of the fruit, were in the state of "panting blue breath," as they say. Bunkichi, in a somewhat off-hand manner, said to one of them: "Do the oranges rot every day?"

"Yes, every day we are much troubled about it; they rot away continually. Already half of the stock we have is spoiled; if it goes on at this rate, within another ten days our whole stock will be lost."

Whereupon the lad said: "Are you really prepared to sell them at whatever price you can get for them?"

"Oh, yes, gladly; for how much better would it be to sell even at a loss than to pay for throwing the rotten stuff away!"

To which Bunkichi answered: "If that is the case, I will buy from you at sixteen *mon* per box as much stock as you have."

The merchant was taken aback at the reply, and said: "Is n't that *too* cheap?"

"But if they rot away, you will get nothing. I am not over-keen to buy," said the lad, coldly; "so if you don't wish to sell, we need not have any further talk."

"Just wait a minute," and the merchant stayed the lad as he was about to leave. "I will sell at sixteen *mon* a box if you will buy up my whole stock."

"Yes, the whole lot," said Bunkichi. "I will buy as many thousand boxes as I can put into a large ship." Thus he bought up the whole stock of that store and then went on to another, buying up the whole stock of each at a very low price. Then he sent a man to the orange farm and collected some more. Having procured a large stock, he put it all on board the *Tenjin-maru* so that, albeit the ship was one of a thousand *koku* burthen, its keel sank deep into the water.

CHAPTER VII

THE SEA-GIANT APPEARS



S Captain Kichidayu sought for sailors by holding out to them promise of wages ten times more than they could get at other times, he soon picked up six sturdy fellows who did not set much value on their lives. Thereupon he reported his success to Bunkichi, who was rejoiced over it, and said: "Then all things are ready now; we shall settle to start in the morning, and I will send to the ship ten pieces of long square timbers. You will place them crosswise on the ship and attach to their ends heavy stones so that she will not upset easily," he continued, with his usual audacity and resourcefulness. "For I have heard that ships which sail about those far-off islands, Hachijo

and Oshima, and the like, are fitted out in this way and sail in safety even in heavy storms. That is why in Yedo they call those island-ships 'sea-sparrows': the weight being on both sides of the ship, they never upset."

Kichidayu was much struck by his keen observation, and said: "Truly, it did n't occur to my mind that those ships are fitted out as you say, but now I recollect having seen them off the coast of Izu Province. As they are thus constructed they never capsize, however much they are washed over by waves."

"Now, Kichidayu San," Bunkichi said, "this ship is called the *Tenjin-maru*, but our going out to sea this time may mean going to her destruction, so let us change her name into *Iurei-maru*, or ghost-ship, and let us imagine ourselves to be dead men by putting on white clothes. Thus nothing that may occur can scare the crew; for, being 'dead' men, they can have no fear of death."

The captain agreed with him, saying: "That 's a splendid idea."

The captain returned to his abode in high spirits and told to the six seamen what the lad had said, and they all readily agreed to the plan, and were so stirred by the lad's courage that they were ready to face any dangers or fears that might come to them.

Bunkichi at once ordered a man to paint on the sail of the ship: "*Iurei-maru*" in large Chinese characters, and at the cloth establishment of the Daikokuya, he ordered eight suits of white clothes.

"Bunkichi," inquired the astonished master, "what is the use of those eight suits of white?"

Bunkichi laughed as he answered: "We may all be dead men before long, if we go out to sea in this storm. The chances of surviving are few, so we are already dead in heart. I have named my ship *Iurei-maru*. We are going to dress

in white with the *sudabukuro*¹ and we shall stick triangular-shaped papers on our foreheads, as they do for the dead."

"What horrible things you do!" exclaimed the wife, while the daughter, Chochō, with sudden inspiration, said: "I will sew your white suit for you."

"I am most grateful," replied the lad, "but I have already ordered others to do it for me."

"Please let me do it," said the girl. "It may be the last—" and at this Bunki-chi consented with thanks.

The master, who seemed to have prepared beforehand, ordered *sake* and a set of little dishes of eatables to be brought forth, and then remarked: "As you have settled to start to-morrow I intend to offer you a congratulatory feast in advance, hoping that you may arrive at Yedo and have good luck and make a great profit."

At last the morrow came, and early in

¹ The purse tied round the neck of the dead at a burial service in Japan.

the morning Bunkichi bade farewell to the men of the Daikokuya and put on his white suit, which was made by the daughter of the house, and went out to the seashore. The master, as well as his wife, with their daughter, Chocho, and all the employees in the shop, followed him in order to see him off. Having heard of his departure, some of the townspeople with whom he was acquainted, and those poor people who had received his alms, flocked together from the four corners of the town to bid him good-by.

Having bade farewell to the people, Bunkichi entered a small boat and soon got on board of the *Iurei-maru*. Those who came to see him off, as they stood around the shore, raised their voices, calling out for Bunkichi, lamenting his departure. Bunkichi gave a signal for the anchor to be weighed and the sail to be hoisted; then the ship soon stood out to sea. Both the men on the shore and those on board the ship waved their hands till their forms had become indiscernible,

while the ship, driven by the strong west wind, soon became lost to sight among the big waves.

Though the *Iurei-maru* had her sail up only seven tenths of its whole length, she sailed on eastward with the speed of an arrow, owing to the strong wind. In a very short time she passed the Sea of Kumanô, and then soon was in the Sea of Isè. As she came to the noted Yenshiu-nada on the evening of that day, the wind grew stronger and the rain came down in torrents. As the huge waves, mountain-high, came rushing from the far ocean and the ship was tossed like a tree-leaf, the crew felt as if they were flung down into the abyss of darkness when she got into the trough of the waves. Those six robust men, who had hitherto worked with steady and fearless courage, suddenly gave in before this state of the sea and lost all heart for labor. Nevertheless Captain Kichidayu, as steady as ever, ran about here and there, stirring the crew up to their work.

Among the eight men all told, the one most unaffected by the dreadful state of the sea was Bunkichi, the *Wanizame-Kozo*, and he, with the captain, lent a helping hand to the tired crew, calling out occasionally: "Hurrah! This is fine! We shall get to Yedo within the next day. Work hard, all of you, and you sha'n't want for pay!" And then he doled out money to the crew, who were encouraged by this and braced themselves up and labored their best.

Meanwhile night fell and the storm continued. Though nothing was visible to the eyes, the awful sound of the waves, and the wind, which shook masts and rigging, deafened the ears; and the heaven and the earth seemed to be swallowed up by the waters.

By degrees the crew's courage began again to fail and one of them muttered: "This is just the sort of night for some big monster like a *wanizame* to appear!" To which another said: "Yes; I feel a bit nervous, too."

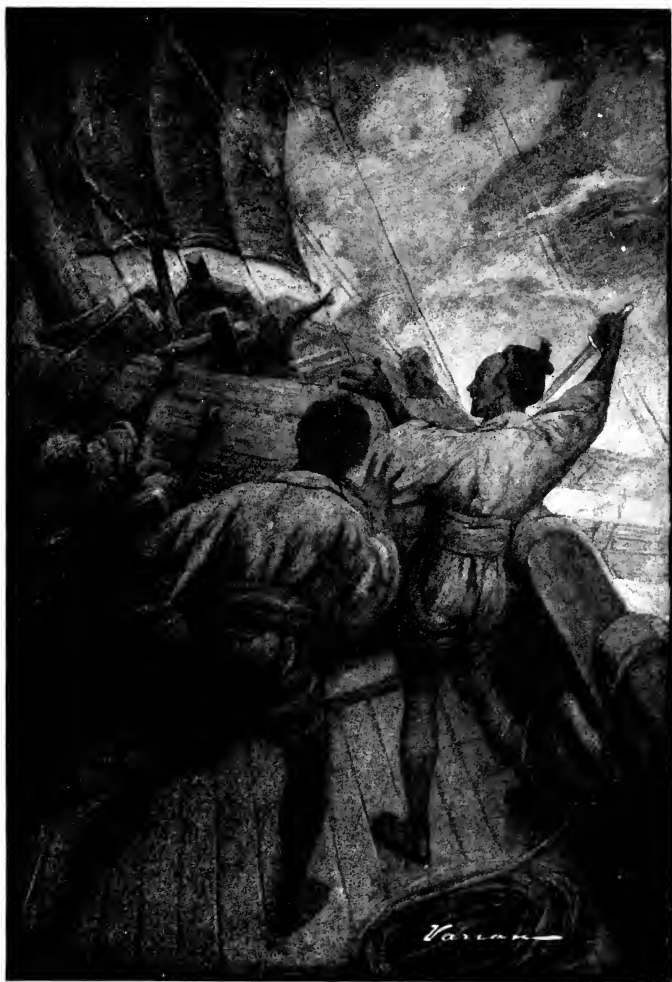
“Come, men; a little more perseverance!” shouted out Bunkichi. So saying, he again gave them an extra wage and continued: “You fear the *wanizame*, do you? I rather think the *wanizame* will be afraid of me because I ’m the *Wanizame-Kozo*. Take heart, all of you! Don’t be afraid!”

The men were cheered up and said: “Truly enough, you once killed the *wanizame*. We need n’t be afraid! Now, all right, sir; we ’re rid of our fears!”

However, their courage was of but short duration; when they gazed at the dark, angry sea they again lost heart, saying: “But, sir, what shall we do if the *umi-bosû*¹ comes up—if it is true, as the people say, the monster lives in this ocean?”

Bunkichi, as he gave them a scornful smile, stood up with his dagger in his hand and said: “I ’ll sweep him down with this sword if any such creature makes his appearance.”

¹ An imaginary giant of the sea.



“He drew his sword and ran toward the monster”

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Just then the man on watch suddenly shrieked: "Ah! the sea-giant has come!" And he ran back toward the stern while the others were frightened out of their wits and ran down into the cabin where they drew their heads back between their shoulders and held their breath in fear. Bunkichi looked toward the bow. Sure enough, a big undefined dark form rose at the front of the ship, about ten feet in height. He drew his sword and ran toward the monster. As he swept the giant down with his sharp weapon, he laughingly returned toward Kichidayu, who stood by the mast.

"What was that?" Kichidayu asked Bunkichi, who answered, still smiling: "It *did* look like a round-headed giant, but really it was only a column of mist which came floating in our way. That's what they call the 'sea-giant,' I suppose, and in their fright they fancied it was coming on board to seize them."

Kichidayu, who was much surprised at Bunkichi's courage, said: "Indeed! I

understand now how you could kill the *wanizame*, by the courage you have just shown, and which I cannot but admire. To speak the truth, I did n't feel very bold myself when I saw that big dark form, but I screwed my courage up so as not to be laughed at by you."

As the crew had not yet come out of their cabin, Kichidayu called out: "Now, men, come up; your master has killed the giant. Come quick, quick!"

The crew trooped out at this, and said: "Truly we heard a shriek a little while ago!" At which Kichidayu muttered, "Fools!"

During the night, however, they got over the Sea of Yenshiu in this manner, and in the very early morning of the third day they were entering the Bay of Yedo. Gradually the sea was becoming much smoother.

"We are safe, master. We can, too, be quite at ease in our hearts!" said one of the men. "Ah! I see the headland of Haneda there. Beyond that there 's the

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Bay of Shinagawa. If we go forward at this rate we shall be at Yedo by dawn: I feel safe now. But I felt that I would be eaten alive when I saw the *umi-boszu* at the Yenshiu-nada Sea."

Then Bunkichi said, as he laughed: "You don't know what you are saying. We have been all along dead men in white suits, and for dead men to have been alive is an absurdity!" Then all, for the first time, burst out into merry, hearty laughter.

Captain Kichidayu turned to Bunkichi, saying: "Master, what a voyage! In a couple of days and nights we sailed the distance which takes about ten days at other times. That we have come here safely through this storm is due to your contrivance of laying the timbers cross-wise on the boat; but for that we should certainly have capsized." Then he turned to the sailors and added: "What say you, my men? Is there any one who could beat him in wit or in courage?"

"No, there's not another like him," all replied in one voice. "He killed the *wani*-

same as well as the *umi-bozu*, and so long as we are with him there is nothing on earth to be dreaded. Please, sir, employ us under you for years to come. We shall never again play cowards as we did, sir!"

Bunkichi replied: "I fear you would never face the *umi-bozu*." To which they could say nothing, but scratched their heads in silence.

Though the wind was still high, after the storm through which they had fought their way out, the inland seas seemed to them "as smooth as matting," as the saying is, and soon after dawn all hands on board the *Iurei-maru* arrived safely at Yedo.

At that time in Yedo the orange merchants, in spite of the stress of weather, had been eagerly awaiting orange-ships from Kishu Province every day, on account of the nearness of the bellows festival. And this was the only ship that did not disappoint their expectations. When the ship's arrival was known, the joy of the merchants was beyond description,

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and soon this popular song immortalized
the happy welcome of the orange-ship:

On the dark sea beholden

A sail, a white sail !

Whence does it hail?

From Kishu's far shore

It brings precious store

Of oranges golden.

CHAPTER VIII

AN ECCENTRIC FELLOW



WHEN all the wholesale dealers in oranges in the vast city of Yedo heard that an orange-ship had at last arrived from Kishu, they vied with one another in coming to Bunkichi's ship and buying up his oranges. The inevitable result of the rise in the price of oranges was to make him a gainer of more than fifty thousand *rio*.

Bunkichi, after this, carefully reasoned out that on account of the recent continuance of the west wind no ship could possibly have sailed from Yedo to Osaka, so that there must be a scarcity of salted salmon in that city, while there was now an abundant and specially cheap supply of them in Yedo. So he thought he would

take a supply over to Osaka and make another great profit.

When he spoke of this plan to his men they were ready to go, for his sake. Thereupon Bunkichi bought up a cargo of salted salmon, and, putting it on board, waited for the return of better weather. Nor had he long to wait. As a reaction, as it were, to the stormy westerly wind, in a few days an east wind began to blow, and, availing himself of the first opportunity, he hoisted sail. He soon entered the harbor of Osaka, and there he again made a profit of tens of thousands of *rio*.

Every speculation he had planned was crowned with success, and in little more than a month he had amassed the enormous sum of near upon a hundred thousand *rio*. He was aided in this success largely by the exertions of Kichidayu, and gave him one thousand *rio* out of the profit, while he handsomely rewarded every one of the crew, who were all greatly delighted at their good fortune.

Captain Kichidayu, taking his money

with him as a present to his family, returned to Sakai, his native town, where he met again his dear wife and children after his long absence, and then went back to Osaka. Thence he accompanied Bunkichi to Kumano-Ura.

At Kumano the news of his safe arrival at Yedo had been received at the Daikokuya and by the townspeople with the liveliest satisfaction. They had been waiting eagerly for his return. Sure enough, Bunkichi had come back on board that very *Iurei-maru*, and the people, whether they were personally known to him or not, flocked round him with their congratulations.

From that day the master of the Daikokuya treated him as his guest, while the people of the town respected him as a gentleman, and no one called him the Wanizame-Kozo any more.

On his arrival home Bunkichi recounted all his transactions to the master of the Daikokuya, and then went at once to the merchants from whom he had bought the

fruit that he sold in Yedo. "I thank you for the cargo of oranges you sold me some time ago at such a cheap price," said he. "I made a great profit by that cargo, but I don't like to be only a gainer myself while you all are losing your money, so I'll give you double what I then paid you for the oranges."

On account of this unexpected liberality they were very grateful to him, and his fame went abroad all over the province of Kii, and everybody began to know him, and whenever he wanted to invest in any goods, he had no difficulty in getting all he wished.

The day came at last when Bunkichi determined to go up to the great city of Yedo to make his name famous in the whole of Japan by trading on a large scale. With this resolve, he negotiated with some of the big merchants of Kumano as to whether they would make a contract with him to send up all their oranges and timber to his shop as their only agency in Yedo. As they were already under a debt

of obligation to him, every one of them agreed to do his best to keep Bunkichi's store in Yedo well supplied. Bunkichi was greatly rejoiced, and, on this occasion traveling overland, he arrived at Yedo in due time and established himself in the Hatchobori district, under the name of Kinokuniya.¹ This happened in the second year of the Sho-o era (1653 A.D.), when he was nineteen years of age. Then he changed his name Bunkichi into Bunzayemon (his father's name), and began to trade on a large scale in timber and oranges from Kishu, selling them to the whole city of Yedo. Thus his prosperity increased.

One day a master carpenter, who had the entrée to the house, came to see Bunzayemon, saying: "I have come to consult with you on a rather strange matter. How would you like to engage a man for your business?"

"Well, it all depends on what kind of a man he is," was the reply.

"He is rather an eccentric sort of fellow. If I tell you plainly about him there

¹House of the Kino Kuni (country of Kii).

will be little chance of your employing him; but the strange thing is that he wishes me to do so. 'If Bunzayemon will employ me, good; if he will not employ me, he is a fool, and I don't want to be employed.' Those were the very words he said to me, and added, to my surprise: 'As for you, if he has n't the sense to engage me, you need n't regret losing such a customer as he is.' "

"I don't wonder you were surprised," replied Bunzayemon; "but what has he been hitherto?"

To this question the carpenter replied: "He is the second son in a warrior family; but as far as I can see he is an idle, lazy man. There are many of his kind in the world, as you know; but he is rather an extreme type of the class. He does n't like to get up early nor to move about at any time. In spite of his being dependent on me for his support, he does n't hesitate to demand to live in luxury. And then he has the impudence to request me to recommend him to you."

Bunzayemon meditated awhile and

then said: "It 's rather interesting, what you tell me. At all events, bring him here."

"Do you really mean to engage him? You had better give him up."

To which the merchant replied: "When I see him I shall decide whether I shall engage him or not. Bring him here first!"

Then Seihachi, the carpenter, went home, fearing inwardly lest he should lose his customer by bringing this man to Bunzayemon's notice, though he could not help acceding to the man's request.

After a time Bunzayemon heard high words in the front of the shop. One of the voices he recognized as that of Seihachi, who was exclaiming: "Chobei San, you ought not to go in by the front door; manners should compel you to go to the back door. And don't give yourself airs here; if you do I shall be disgraced."

To this the other replied: "What are you talking about? We are not dogs; why should we go round to the kitchen?"

And so saying, the young man stalked up to the shop called Kinokuniya, in spite of Seihachi's remonstrance, and asked somewhat loudly: "Is the master at home?"

Hearing him, Bunzayemon entered the shop from the inner room.

No sooner did Seihachi see him than he began to apologize: "Master, I am more sorry than I can tell you, and I beg your pardon for this fellow's rudeness." As he spoke he was holding Chobei by the sleeve.

Bunzayemon, without heeding the apology, civilly welcomed the strange guest, saying: "Come in, sir."

The young man stalked into the inner room, while Seihachi, feeling like a fish out of water, followed him. Bunzayemon ushered the guests into one of the finest rooms in his house. Seihachi was troubled at heart, for the man's clothes were muddy, and said: "Sir, I fear we shall soil your floor."

Without even listening to Seihachi's words, or showing that he had heard

them, the host courteously said: "I am Bunzayemon of the Kinokuniya; and what is your name?"

"My name is Chobei," answered the youth somewhat haughtily.

"I'm glad to make your acquaintance."

Seihachi kept making signs to Chobei as to his behavior, but the latter did not take the least notice.

Seihachi in his distress said to Bunzayemon: "Please, sir, I beg your pardon for his unmannerly behavior. I think he must be a little out of his mind. I'm sorry to have brought such a fellow."

Meanwhile Bunzayemon and Chobei sat with the *tabakobon*¹ between them and looked into each other's face. For a while neither of them spoke, while Seihachi, whose trouble of mind was increased by this state of affairs, tried to extricate himself from this uncomfortable position and said:

"Chobei San, we had better take our leave now." Then, turning to the host,

¹ A tobacco-tray.

"Sir, you won't engage him after all, will you, sir?"

At this Bunzayemon, speaking somewhat loudly, said: "Oh, yes, I'll engage you, Chobei San, and take you on as one of my men, if that is your wish."

"Then do you really engage me?" And as he spoke Chobei quickly moved backward a little and bowed to the floor, in the act of showing respect and thanks to his superior.

Bunzayemon then put on a lordly air and asked him: "Chobei, are you skilled in working the abacus?"¹

"I don't know much about it," he replied, as he placed both his hands on the matting in the attitude of respect, "because I was bred in a warrior family."

"If that is so you'll be of no use in the shop," said the master, scornfully. "What can you do, then?"

To which Chobei answered, "I know how to turn a lot of money, sir."

¹ The Chinese reckoning-board, consisting of beads or balls strung on wires or rods set in a frame.

“That ’s interesting!” replied the master.

The carpenter, stricken dumb with astonishment while the negotiation was going on, said at last, when Chobei had gone, “Sir, have you really engaged him? I can’t tell you how relieved I am. I’ve been greatly troubled by the thought that I should be disgraced on account of him. Please tell me why were you so civil to him at first?”

“You don’t understand, I see,” said Bunzayemon, laughing. “Before I engaged him he was my guest, and as he belongs to the warrior class, his social rank is entitled to consideration. But when I have once engaged him, then I am his master, and he is my servant, and I must treat him accordingly.”

“I see, I see,” said the carpenter. “That is a fine way of looking at it. Well, then, suppose I go to another man’s house, I may act in a like haughty manner myself before I get engaged!”

“Certainly; but if you do, you may get



“Bunzayemon then put on a lordly air”

disliked instead of engaged ”; at which reply the carpenter was profoundly puzzled.

Early the next day the new employee begged his master to advance him some pocket money, which was promptly given him; and having got it, off he went, no one knew whither, and did not return even for the midday meal.

Then the other employees warned their master, saying: “ Sir, what is the use of that sort of man? We don’t know where he has come from. It ’s really unsafe to have that sort of fellow about the house, sir.”

But the master paid no heed to their warnings. “ Not a bit of it! No matter where his birthplace is, so long as the man is worth having, my purpose is served. I can see he has plenty of common sense, and I ’ll warrant he ’ll be of good service some day. Whenever you plan on a large scale you must have good assistants: there were four kindly men under Yoshisune, the great general, and twenty-eight generals under Shingen, the great lord of the

middle ages. Such men we look to for our examples. Since the days of old every distinguished man has attached to himself able supporters. Merchants should do the same, and, as certain as the day dawns, success will come to the business man who employs many good hands under him. Wait and see. Chobei will do some noteworthy things!" Thus he instructed his servants in his principles.

Toward the evening of that day Chobei came back, but with a downcast countenance. Bunzayemon did not ask where he had been, nor did Chobei volunteer any information. The next day again, and the next, he asked for more money, and went out early in the morning, coming back late at night. He continued in this way for about half a month. The others once more warned their master, but he still refused to listen to them.

One day Chobei came to his master and said: "Sir, you import a lot of timber from Kii Province and try to sell it at once among the people of this city. But Yedo

is a place where fires are so frequent that, if you buy up a lot of timber at a time when the price is low and keep it, it 's certain you will make a great profit when some big fire occurs. But to find a good place for keeping timber," he went on, " is one of the chief difficulties, because, as you are well aware, if you keep it near at hand, in the heart of the city, there 's danger of its being destroyed by fire, and if you keep it in a river or the sea, either it rots or is eaten by worms. Now, every day I have been going about looking for a good place to keep it, and at last I have found one at Kiba in Fukagawa. Keep timber in the water of that place, and, on account of the quality of the water, worms will not eat it, but the wood will become shiny and improve by keeping. Besides, no danger will come to it from fire." And he concluded his far-sighted plan with, " For these reasons, I hope you will soon construct a reservoir for timber in that place."

The master clapped his hands in admiration and joy, saying: " Upon my word,

that 's a capital idea! I thought you must have been planning something, but I never thought you were looking out for a place to keep timber. I myself had turned the matter over in my mind some time ago, but on account of my many other duties I had n't the time to see to it myself, and I thank you for undertaking it for me." And then and there he intrusted the building of the timber reservoir to Chobei.

Chobei lost no time in going to Fukagawa and buying ten thousand *tsubo*, or about forty thousand square yards, of ground near the temple of Susaki. He built a large reservoir there and removed to it all the timber imported by his master from Kii Province. Besides, Chobei got his master's permission to send out men to the neighboring mountains to buy up timber where it could be got cheap, and having deposited it all at Fukagawa, waited contentedly for the time to sell.

CHAPTER IX

THE GREAT CONFLAGRATION—THE CHARITY “BENTO”



IT was on the 18th of January in the third year of the Meireki era (1657 A.D.) that a bitterly cold north wind, much colder than usual, was blowing hard. As the wind increased in strength, the foot-passengers, even in the busy streets, became fewer. From the hour of *ne*, or the snake, which is the same as ten o'clock A.M. in our modern reckoning, it had become a regular hurricane, raising clouds of dust and even whirling pebbles into the air. It seemed as if the heavens and the earth were creaking and shaking under the rage of it. At this juncture the people of the city were alarmed by the repeated

hasty ringing of several fire-bells in the direction of the Hongo district, the northern part of the city. Everybody went up to his fire-lookout and saw the ominous black smoke rising in the shape of a vast eddying cloud over the part of the city called Maruyama in Hongo.¹

It happened that, a few days before, Bunzayemon, with five or six young men and a plentiful supply of money, had gone into the mountains of the neighboring country to buy lumber, leaving the management of his affairs, in his absence, entirely to Chobei San.

So when Chobei hurried up to the lookout to ascertain where it was that the fire had broken out, he glanced up to the heavens and said to himself: "From the appearance of the sky this wind will not fall for some time, and in all probability the whole city will be burned down, because the houses are quite dried up by the continued fine weather we have been having lately. This is the time to save many peo-

¹ Hongo precinct of the Maruyama Mountain.

ple, and it is also a very good time to make a great deal of profit!"

Saying this, Chobei made for the shop and issued orders in excited haste to the men. "Now, you men must form yourselves into two bands: one to go straight to Fukagawa and get a huge iron pot and a quantity of rice to be boiled, and make preparations for a charity lunch for the poor; the other to stay here and put together all the goods in the shop that we may transfer them without loss of time to Fukagawa." Though the men complained against his hasty decision to retreat before the distant fire, they could not resist the order of the chief man in the shop, so they reluctantly began to pack up the goods in preparation for departure, though they thought it would only prove necessary in the end to brush the dust and soot from off them. Seeing how they were employed, the neighbors, too, jeered at the hurry they were in; but consternation soon spread even among these neighbors when the sparks, carried and fanned by the wind,

had started fresh fires—one at Kanda¹ and another at Nihonbashi, the business part of the city.

By this time Chobei had already closed the shop and sent off some valuables and some furniture on carts to Fukagawa, escorted by the men of the shop, while he had all the timber floated down the river to the same place, to be put with the other timber which had already been stored there. Chobei was much delighted to find that all the preparations for the charity luncheon for the destitute had been carried out by those who had gone before them. "For our first work is the saving of the people," he exclaimed.

So saying, he engaged a few coolies to assist the men in boiling the rice and so forth. Having wrapped the boiled rice in broad bamboo leaves, together with pickled *daikon*,² he contrived a luncheon for many thousands of the poor in no time.

The stronger the wind grew the far-

¹ A precinct of Yedo.

² Large white radishes.

ther the fire spread: it devastated the city with such rapidity that noontide of that day saw even the districts of Hachobori and Shiba reduced to heaps of smoldering ashes. Those who were burned out had not had time to put away their furniture, but only escaped with their lives, and were seeking in vain to find shelter in the houses of their relatives, who had suffered a like fate with them and could not assist them. Not knowing where to turn, they wandered about in terror the whole day, and their misery was such that they could not even get themselves food.

While this was the state of things, a band of coolies came among them with a rectangular bamboo basket with *bento*¹ in it, and one of them held aloft a paper flag with huge characters on it, which read as follows: "Kinokuniya Bunzayemon's Charity Luncheon!"

The coolies distributed this *bento* among the men and women who were in distress. Every man and woman, there-

¹ Luncheon.

fore, whether young or old, who was sore oppressed by hunger, was glad to get hold of this food and was relieved by it, though it was only for a time. With admirable sagacity Chobei quickly hired many more coolies and prepared more luncheons, sending them to every quarter of the city; and so wherever men went they saw the selfsame flag flying for charity, and the whole city was surprised, and praised the generosity of this Kinokuniya Bunzayemon.

In this great fire even those large palaces of the *daimios*,¹ which stood in the line of the fire and which could in ordinary days call up many hands to keep the fire off, were not able to escape from the disaster. Even the nobles of high rank and their retainers knew not where to find shelter, but stood bewildered in the corners of their big gardens and waited for help, but in vain. For such personages Chobei ordered men to prepare *bento* in nice packages of *sasaori*² and to present it to those

¹ Feudal lords, or the nobility of Japan.

² Boxes made with bamboo leaves.

nobles and their households in the name of Kinokuniya Bunzayemon. In consequence, even the servants of these nobles were grateful to the coolies, and received the presents on behalf of their masters.

Then, too, Chobei ordered the men of Kinokuniya to put up wooden inclosures round about the grounds of those nobles to protect them from robbery or trespass.

The fire raged through the whole night of the 18th and through the whole of the next day, so Chobei engaged yet more coolies, and ordered them to make more charity *bento* for the relief of the poor.

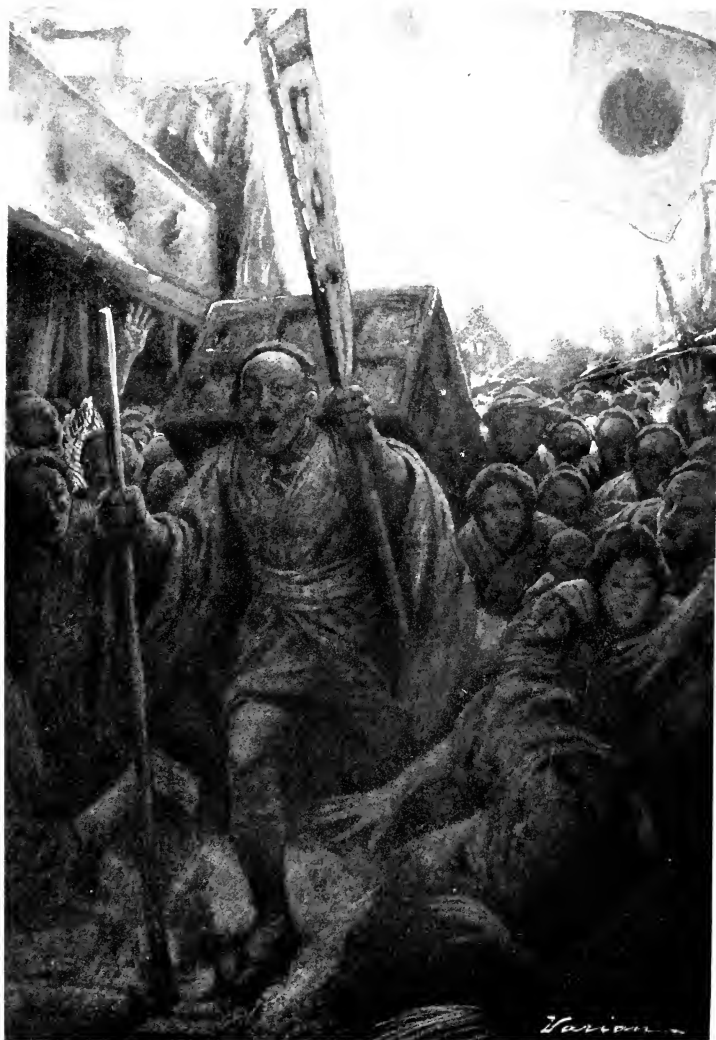
There was a certain man named Kamada Matahachi, who was well known for his physical strength. He had always kept a large portable closet, about six feet by three, and five feet seven inches in height, in which to carry his furniture in case of fire. When he thought his house was in danger, he put all his belongings into this box, placed a sheet of matting on the top, and carried all these on his back by the means of a rope specially prepared for the purpose. Carrying a long, heavy stick in

his hand, he walked unconcernedly and steadily among the crowd like an elephant among dogs. Every one marveled at his size and strength, and was forced to make room for him to go by. When he came to Fukagawa to escape from the fire, he saw there a large sign which read:

Day laborers are wanted for carrying the charity *bento*. Let all who wish to be engaged call at the timber reservoir of Kinokuniya Bunzayemon at Fukagawa. Three meals will be given, and one *kwan mon*¹ will be paid daily for wages.

As he had nowhere to go at the time, he was glad to find some work. He went to the timber reservoir of Bunzayemon, where he found a bustle and hurry of men and women, hundreds in number, for the preparation of luncheon. Some were preparing a quantity of rice in large iron pots, others were cutting up some pickles, while a third set of men were wrapping these up in bamboo leaves.

¹ A sum about equal to one dollar.



Matakichi in the great fire at Yedo

Many bands of coolies with their paper flags were carrying out the luncheons in the baskets, while others were coming back with empty ones.

Matahachi, with that big closet on his back, drew near to the place and thundered out: "Is this the place where hands are wanted?" The people turned, and without giving any answer simply looked at one another in astonishment at his curious appearance.

Once more he called out: "I 'm one Kamada Matahachi; I come to assist your charity work for the rescue of the people."

The voice apparently penetrated even to the inner room, for Chobei came out and was also surprised by the man's appearance, but said: "Nothing can be more fortunate for us than to have the assistance of Mr. Matahachi, who is noted in the whole of Yedo for his physical strength. Please help us in our work by distributing the *bento* in this big, light-wood chest."

With ready acquiescence Matahachi laid aside the heavy baggage on his back.

"This is my furniture," he said; "please keep it for me." The rattling sound of iron and china in the chest made those near by wonder at the forethought with which he had made provision against the contingency of a fire, and by which he had been enabled to move away at once with all his household goods.

Having safely stowed away his possessions, Matahachi lifted the big wooden chest, now packed with *bento*, and by means of a rope put it on his back, and, holding the big pole of hard oak-wood in his right hand and the paper flag in his left, started forth to the scene of ruin, with one coolie to assist him.

As he called out in a loud, deep tone of voice to announce the charity, the people turned to him in astonishment and soon came flocking around him. The attendant coolie, standing behind, distributed the *bento* from the chest on Matahachi's back with no inconvenience. So these two finished their task in less time than it would have taken five or six men to do

it with ordinary methods. On their way back to Kinokuniya, when they came to a crowded place Matahachi put forth his staff, and by pushing the crowd to one side made his way through without any hindrance.

In one of those crowded places he heard the shrieking cry of a girl. Forcing his way to the spot, he found a girl of twelve or thirteen years of age who could not get up on account of being trodden down by the crowd. Being naturally of a chivalrous character, he soon helped the girl up and asked whether she had not her parents with her.

She sobbed, and said: "We all ran away when the fire broke out, and I became separated from my parents!"

As he could not leave her there, he said: "That cannot be helped. If you wander about here you may be trampled to death. I will take you to a better place if you will get into my empty chest." So the coolie helped her in, and they hastened on to Fukagawa.

At another time he saw an old woman of about threescore years, half dead, lying by the wayside with her dress partly burned. He felt he could not leave her behind in such a state, so she, too, was put into the bamboo basket by the side of the girl.

Having got back to Fukagawa, he said to Chobei: "I rescued these two on the way home. Give them the treatment which is suited to their need." He handed them over to the acting master, who thanked Matahachi, and thus addressed the other bands of coolies: "To give away the *bento* alone does not cover the whole work of charity; whenever any of you are coming back with empty chests, you, too, had better bring people home, if such help is needed as these two received." And a cordial reception was given to the old woman as well as to the young girl.

During such a fire there were naturally many lost children and aged persons who might have been trodden down under foot. Having understood Chobei's instructions,

the other bands from that time were sure to bring back two or three who needed help. To any who were thus brought in Chobei gave proper treatment, and as he gave the coolies prizes they worked with great zeal and diligence. Kamada Matahachi went in and out of the fire ruins many times a day and repeated the same charitable work. The five or six hundred coolies did their best, also, and, in consequence, at the reservoir there was a continuous trooping out with the *bento* and trooping in of the people; and by the night of the 19th there were 2800 rescued persons, old and young, all told, who had been brought to this temporary shelter.

Even on the night of the 19th there was no sign of the abating of the fire. The strong northwest wind was still raging, and within two days, the Hongo, Kanda, Nihonbashi, Kyobashi, and Shiba districts were all swept by the fire. And now the fire was burning down Takanawa with such terrific force that the very sea-line seemed to recede before it. But that night

the wind suddenly changed to the south-east, and the fire turned backward and licked up all the houses on both sides of the great river Sumida and those that had survived at first in Asakusa and round about Yushima. Then at last it was got under control near to Senju about noonday on the 20th. And since the morning of the 18th, within three days and two nights, the whole city of Yedo had been reduced to ashes and as many as 108,000 people were lost. It was one of the most terrible of fires.

Indeed, such a disastrous fire had never before and has never since occurred in Yedo, and even now it is sadly referred to by the people as the "Furisode-Kwaji"—the long-sleeved fire—quite as often as it is called the great fire of Hongo-Maruyama.

CHAPTER X

AMBITION SATISFIED—THE MERCHANT PRINCE



INOKUNIYA BUNZAYEMON, who unknowingly had left such a big fire behind him and sought the mountainous districts of the neighboring provinces as his field of action, went over to Sagami Province the same day, and negotiated with the chief owners of forests there and made a contract with them, paying them guaranty money in advance. The next day he crossed over to Awa Province and visited in turn the owners of mountain forests in Kazusa, Shimo-osa, and Musashi, and struck bargains with them to buy all their salable timber. Four or five days only were occupied in these rapid negotiations, at the end of which time, as the

rumor of the big fire of Yedo had got abroad to these neighboring provinces, Kibun hastened on his way back to Yedo. As he was passing amidst the smoldering ruins on the way to his depot at Fukagawa, he continually heard the people talking of himself. Every time he stopped and listened. "Well, Genbei San, Kinokuniya Bunzayemon is a fine fellow, is n't he? One would think he had foreseen the fire and prepared that enormous amount of *bento* beforehand; otherwise he could not possibly have given it out to the people so readily. I and others had nowhere to find food, so we supported ourselves for three days on that *bento*."

"Is that so, Hachibei San? I also received it every day. For three days, wherever one went among the ruins one was met with his charity. It's said that within three days no less than two thousand *koku*¹ of rice were given away. Had it not been for that charity nearly the whole population of the city would

¹ Ten thousand bushels.

have famished. Moreover, Genbei San, the charity was extended even to the mansions of many *daimios*, and the nobles and their families ate of his *bento*."

"To be sure. Even the nobles with their heaps of gold and all their power could n't buy a single grain in the general consternation! Really that Kibun, whoever he may be, is a sagacious fellow!" Thus the men talked who had received his alms.

While Bunzayemon, who listened to this current talk, was inwardly rejoicing that Chobei had managed his affairs so admirably, he passed two women who were talking.

"Oh, Haru San, when I lost sight of my child in the crowd," one of them was saying, "I became almost mad in my search for her; but as I could not find her in the hurry and bustle, I gave her up for being trodden to death or else for being suffocated in the heat. In my grief I lost all care for my own life. But then I heard the people say that some thousands of

strayed children had been taken to Kibun's country place at Fukagawa. I ran there at once, and lo! I found my little girl there among the children. My joy, of course, knew no bounds. Let people say what they wish, Kibun must be a merciful man; in such a fire as this naturally there are a lot of strayed children, and therefore he sent out his men to every quarter of the city, ordering them to bring such to his house. In three days a thousand or more people were rescued, they say. Henceforth I will always have a niche for Kibun Sama in my heart."

"I will, too. Your case was not so bad as mine. For my part, when I lost sight of my mother, no words could express my anxiety. If she had been in sound health, I would have felt a little easier, but she has been laid up since last winter on account of her great age. At first we thought we were safe from the conflagration, as the fire had passed by us toward Takanawa; but then by the change of wind the sparks started the fire afresh at the very next door

to our own. The men belonging to the house had gone to Takanawa to help a relative of ours there, and I thought it would be a shame to me if by my indecision the fire should cause the death of my mother; so, holding mother's hand, I dragged her from the house.

"After two or three *chos*'¹ run, mother was out of breath and consequently could n't walk a step farther. I put her on my back and ran on, but we were both soon suffocated by the smoke, and then I tumbled down. I could n't get up for some time because other people who were running to escape from the flames trod on me.

"In another minute the sparks set fire to my dress and my whole body was nearly burned. However, I braced myself up and got on my feet, being very anxious about my mother. I looked round, and she was not there. I knew she could n't possibly have run away, owing to her helplessness; so I looked around me, being sure she must be either in a ditch or stu-

¹ One *cho* equals about one hundred and twenty yards.

pefied by the smoke. The fire, however, was too quick for me. I could n't stay to make further search, so I ran away. I have been weeping since at the thought of mother's death, when yesterday I heard a report that mother was safe at Fukagawa. I flew to the place and met her. When I asked how she had got there she told me that she had been rescued by the coolies of a certain Kibun, and after being brought there had received the most kind treatment. Henceforth I 'll not sleep with my feet toward Fukagawa."

Hearing this, Bunzayemon was further struck by the excellent management of Chobei. On his way home through the desolation and ruin he also passed by many of the *daimios'* palace-grounds, when he saw his own trade-mark on all the boardings put up as temporary inclosures.

As he was wondering at this new proof of Chobei's energy and wisdom, two *samurai*, or retainers, came by talking.

"Look, my friend! The inclosure of this mansion, too, seems to have been put

up by Kibun's people. The man is wonderfully ready for everything! And no doubt the fact that he has put up the temporary inclosure means that the rebuilding will be put into his hands, and no better man could probably be found."

"You are right. If we employ him he's certain to lose no time about it."

Bunzayemon, who overheard this conversation, clapped his hands in admiration, and, turning to his attendants, said: "How now, my fellows! You did n't think much of Chobei at first, did you? Well, what do you think of him now?"

The attendants looked at one another and said: "Really, he is very clever—even more clever than you, sir! Yes, unless a man employs some men cleverer than himself he can never become great!"

With unbounded joy Bunzayemon soon arrived at his depot at Fukagawa. No sooner did he catch sight of Chobei than he held out his hand to him, saying: "Ah! I have no words in which to express my thanks to you. I have been hearing from

the chance talk of the people on my way home of all you have been doing in my absence, and have been much struck by your sagacity. Indeed, I have never felt so much joy as I experience to-day!"

Bunzayemon, who was not accustomed to show joy or sorrow in his face, could not suppress his emotion on that day.

Almost all the houses in the city of Yedo were destroyed by the fire. Warriors and merchants had to build their abodes afresh, and because all the timber in the city was reduced to ashes, the price at once went up tenfold. Now Kibun alone, at this juncture, had already a great stock of timber on hand at his depot at Fukagawa, and he had fresh supplies constantly being sent in from the mountains in the near-by country, being the timber he had lately bought. The profit which he gained by selling all this material was something enormous.

Moreover, on account of his alms and the inclosures he had put up for various great feudal lords, they too became his



“I have no words in which to express my thanks to you”

customers and asked him to rebuild their mansions. By these orders he again made a great profit. He ascribed this good fortune entirely to Chobei, to whom he gave a great sum of money as a token of appreciation of his services. Besides, he handsomely rewarded the other men and boys in his employ.

He also sent for that chief carpenter, Seihachi.

"Well, Seihachi, this is the prize which I give you."

Thus saying, he put a box which contained one thousand *rio* in front of him.

The other was frightened out of his wits.

"Oh! do you say there 's a gift of a thousand *rio* for me in this packet? Is n't it empty?"

"No, it 's not empty. Lift it and see."

Whereupon Seihachi tried to lift it and said: "Truly, it 's too heavy; I can't lift it! Is n't this a dream?" said he, as he pinched his knee.

Bunzayemon laughed. "It is not a

dream. It 's a reward to you, sure and certain, and you had better take it home with you."

" Really, I thank you, sir. In the time of the fire I carried charity *bento* only three times, for I was working at other things; therefore I 'm not worthy of so great a reward! "

" It is n't a reward for that."

" Then for the inclosure which I did for Sendai Sama, the *daimio*; for that work my assistants came late, so I could n't finish it till late in the evening. The work ought to have been finished much earlier."

" It is n't for that."

" Not for that, either? For what is it, then, sir? "

Bunzayemon pointed to Chobei, who was then in the shop, and said: " You brought me that excellent article, there. It 's for that."

The carpenter misunderstood him and said: " Is that so? I see, for that article. That 's an article rarely found, and I thought it would be a great loss if it was

burnt, so before other things I sent it down on a raft from Hachobori to Fukagawa. Then on the way it collided with a ship and the raft was nearly broken to pieces."

"What are you talking about?"

"You mean that hinoki plank, do you not, of eight inches both in breadth and thickness?"

"No; you don't understand me, yet. It is your prize for bringing Chobei to me."

"You mean Chobei San. Ah, I see, I see! I did not understand you. I wondered why you gave me such a handsome reward. But Chobei San has certainly proved to be an excellent man. I thought he was a hopeless fellow. Shall I bring you another Chobei San? I have a lot more."

"What sort of Chobei is he?"

"The next idlest fellow who depends on me for support."

Bunzayemon laughed, saying, "No, thank you; I don't want another Chobei of that kind."

In this wise, Bunzayemon, by the help of Chobei, undertook various important schemes and accumulated great wealth. Thus in time his fame had sounded through the whole of Japan and he had built a big establishment at Honhachobori, —a street in Tokio, near the heart of the city,—which covered one *cho* square. Always strenuously pushing forward his business, he at last, as had been his ambition, became the leading merchant in the whole of Japan. As the old verse says:

The heavy gourd from slender stem takes
birth,
From strenuous will spring deeds of weighty
worth.

